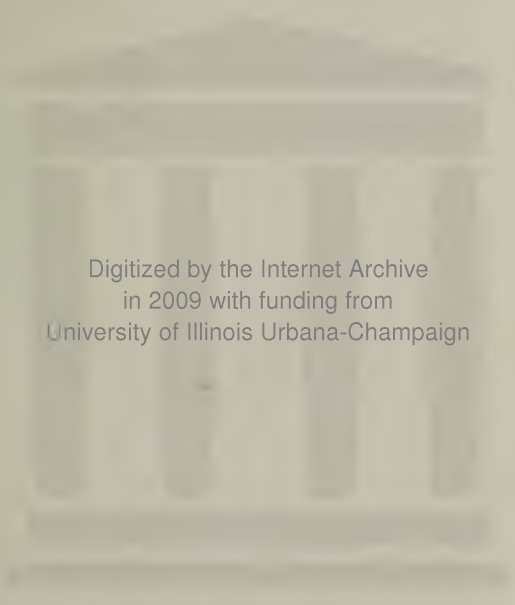


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PRECIPITANCE:

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HIGHLAND TALE.



BY A LADY.

Mrs. Anne of Logan

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



EDINBURGH:

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR WILLIAM ARBUTHNOT, BART.

LORD PROVOST OF EDINBURGH,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED,

IN TESTIMONY OF

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PREFACE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

I have written this book for the purpose of presenting to the public a summary of the results of my researches in the field of the history of the human mind. It is not intended as a simple report of the results of the treatment of the various subjects which have been treated in the preceding chapters. While I try to give the reader a clear and concise statement of the facts and theories which have been advanced in the course of the investigation, I do not attempt to give a complete and exhaustive account of the progress of the science. It is necessary for me to be brief, and to omit many of the details which would be necessary for a full and complete understanding of the subject. I have, however, endeavored to give a clear and concise statement of the results of the investigation, and to present the reader with a clear and concise statement of the facts and theories which have been advanced in the course of the investigation. I have, however, endeavored to give a clear and concise statement of the results of the investigation, and to present the reader with a clear and concise statement of the facts and theories which have been advanced in the course of the investigation.

PREFACE.

I PRESENT the following Tale to the Public with much anxiety and many fears concerning its acceptance. The strongest language is insufficient to apologize for the temerity of the intrusion. While I rely on the indulgence of the common reader for the defects of an inexperienced writer, it is necessary for me to deprecate the censure of the learned and the romantic, for whom this little work is not intended. My aim has been, a simple representation of the manners of ordi-

nary life, not a delineation of singular characters, deep evolutions of events, and marvellous adventures. How far I have succeeded the candid reader will determine.

I should be deficient in gratitude if I omitted an acknowledgment of my obligations to the friends whose exertions have aided me in this (to me) arduous undertaking. The feelings of those friends will tell them where my warmest thanks are due.

PRECIPITANCE:...

A Highland Tale.

CHAPTER I.

ONE evening early in the month of October 1807, the family of Mr. Alexander Fraser, clergyman of the parish of Glenerrach, were alarmed, as they were seated after tea, by voices hallooing for lights. Alexander, the youngest son, immediately went out, accompanied by a servant bearing a lantern, and shortly after returned, ushering in two young gentlemen. Mr. Fraser senior received them with the greatest hospitality; and when they attempted to apologise, begged they would say nothing on the subject, as any one who could refuse shelter to their fellow-creatures on such a

night as that must be void of humanity. Tea was immediately ordered, as the refreshment they preferred; and in the mean time the strangers gave their names as Mr. Morris and Mr. Henly, and accounted for having been out in such a storm by saying that they had left Fort-William that morning to proceed to Inverness, in order that they might view the Caledonian Canal. They had refused a guide from the place they had last stopped at, and soon after the storm came on they completely lost their way, and certainly were very much rejoiced when they saw the light of that house, which they had taken for an inn. This they hoped would plead their excuse.

Every thing was said by both Mr. and Mrs. Fraser to make them feel perfectly at ease. The sons also shewed them much kindness; and if the wanderers could judge by the looks of *one* of the young ladies at least, the addition of two gentlemen (by whatever accident

brought about) was no unpleasant interruption to their family party.

In the course of the evening the strangers gave their hosts to understand they had just returned from Staffa. They had, in the course of the three preceding years, visited various parts of England, Scotland, and Wales. During these tours they had met with much attention. "But," added Morris, with much enthusiasm, "we never knew what true hospitality was till we came to the Highlands of Scotland. At first we felt much at the idea of intruding on private families, as we were given to understand, when we left Oban on our way to Staffa, that till we should return there, we would scarce meet with an inn. This information we found correct, but certainly we had no cause to regret it, as the kindness of the gentlemen at whose houses we were left us nothing to wish for: their time, horses, and dogs were at our disposal; and all done in such a way that they almost

tempted us to suppose we were conferring favours, rather than receiving them.

During the evening much conversation passed, in which the two strangers shewed that they had noted well all they met with in their travels. About ten o'clock they were shewn to their apartment, which was a double-bedded room. They were no sooner left to themselves than Henly exclaimed, "What a fascinating girl that Elizabeth Fraser is!"

"Heyday! George," said Morris, "you are at your old tricks again. I see you are caught for at least the hundredth time. But do not look so silly; I would sooner acquit you here than in many other cases."

"Well, well," said Henly, laughing, "have it your own way; but, joking apart, I do not know when I have seen so fascinating a girl: I wonder where the deuce she has been educated;—not in this wild barbarous mountain, I am

sure, for her manner is as polished as if she had passed all her life in the highest circles. But goodnight!—I must go to bed and dream of the fair Elizabeth.”

A conversation very similar to this was passing in the parlour among the family, as soon as the old gentleman returned from seeing his guests to their apartment. “I hope, my dear,” said the old lady, “that every thing was comfortable in the strangers’ room?”

“Every thing is as it should be,” said Mr. Fraser. “Well, my girls,” said he, turning to his daughters, “what do you think of the strangers?”

“I think,” said Catherine (the elder daughter), “that they are very genteel looking young men: Mr. Henly seems the more lively of the two; but I think the other is the more agreeable.”

“Oh, Kate,” said Elizabeth, “that is because you had more opportunities of judging. I think Mr. Henly is the most pleasing; he is so lively, and gives such a nice account of all he has seen,

that it is quite delightful to hear him : I do not know when I saw a more agreeable young man ; and he is very good-looking. Do not you think so, Archibald ?” said she, turning to her oldest brother, who answered her with a smile. “ I know you laugh at me : you think I am of opinion that every *good-looking person* must be amiable : I have sometimes, to be sure, been a little disappointed ; but I do not think I will on this occasion. But, papa, I hope you will not allow them to go till after our harvest-home ball : I am sure it is quite fortunate they have come at this time. I speak for myself, for Kate is secure of her beau : Allan Cameron will surely make it his business to attend her.”

“ Come, come,” said Mr. Fraser, “ you giddy lassie, prepare for bed ; do you not see your mother almost asleep. Set your heart at rest,—I do not think to-morrow will be a day for any one leaving shelter,—it promises to be a

dreadful night. Let us compose ourselves, however, and return thanks to the great Dispenser of every good and perfect gift, who not only provides for us, but enables us out of our abundance to shew hospitality to the weary traveller."

The servants were now called in; and the day ended, as it usually did at the Manse, in thanksgiving and prayer. Immediately after which they bid each other affectionately goodnight, and retired to their respective apartments.

While this worthy family are enjoying the sweets of a good night's rest, I shall endeavour to shew why they were in manner and education superior to what might be expected in that wild part of the country.

The reverend Alexander Fraser and his wife were descended from the same family—the grandfather of Mrs. Fraser and the father of her husband being brothers. Mrs. Fraser's grandfather being the oldest son, was what the

Highlanders call the Chief of that branch of the Fraser clan. During the rebellion of 1745, the Laird took part with the unfortunate Charles: the consequence is obvious—his property was confiscated, and his family, consisting of his wife and two children, were reduced to comparative beggary. He having been engaged in the unfortunate battle of Culloden, which was so fatal to the hopes of Charles and his adherents, immediately took refuge in France, where he remained till Government permitted him to return to Scotland, which it did at the intercession of his friends at home. His brother, more prudent, took no active part (whatever his private feelings were, he concealed them), and in the midst of all the turbulence of civil war, continued to cultivate his farm, which was his patrimony. This also enabled him to take his brother's family home to his own house, which he did, and there they remained till the return of the Laird from

France, at which time there only survived one son (the father of Mrs. Fraser), the mother and the little girl having both died shortly before. At this time also there was no appearance of a family to his brother, so that he had every reason to hope his son would inherit his uncle's property; and in this idea he died shortly after.

However, matters did not turn out according to these expectations; for, after a few years, our reverend friend, Mr. Alexander Fraser, was born. This made a material change in the views of the young man, now in his eighteenth year, who had been always called the Laird; and so much were the good couple attached to their nephew, that they almost regretted this addition to their family. But they were well aware that their small estate could not support them all as they ought to live, and that it would be requisite for Hector to choose some profession. Mr. Fraser dreaded speaking to him, fearful of say-

ing any thing that might hurt his feelings. But all these fears were done away in a few days by Hector saying he wished to speak to his uncle, and to consult him on an offer which had been made to him. They went to the closet of the old gentleman, where he generally transacted business, and Hector addressed him in the following words.

“ My more than father, how can I ever have the courage to tell you we must part? or how can I ever bring myself to say farewell to you and my dear aunt? But so it is. Ever since the birth of your dear little boy, I have been forming a thousand plans for my future support. The army is the line I preferred, but I did not know how to manage. All anxiety is now spared me, as here is an offer of an ensigncy in Fraser’s regiment, which is now under orders for America. Say, uncle, that you have no objections, for as I have made up my mind, it will grieve me if I have not your concurrence.”

The old man was some time ere he could speak, and when he found utterance, it was only to say to his nephew, that he never would object to this plan, as he would prefer his choice of the army to any other profession ; it was a line of life befitting the son of a soldier.

He now read the letter, which requested him (Hector) to join at Inverness as soon as possible, as the company he was attached to were to leave that place immediately for Edinburgh Castle to join the regiment, and to proceed from that to Greenock, where they were to embark for America. The letter concluded by saying, that a fortnight was the utmost time that he could be allowed to remain with his friends.

All was now bustle and confusion in preparing their young master (as he was called) for his journey. The necessary equipments, suitable to his birth, were provided with a liberal hand by

her who had always evinced a mother's fondness for him.

A few days before he was to set off, he was told that Sandy Grant wished to speak to him. "Oh, my poor foster father!" said he; "I intended to have walked over to-morrow forenoon to have bid goodbye to him and my nurse. I need not, Sir," said he, turning to his uncle, "recommend this kind and worthy couple to you."

"You need not," said Mr. Fraser; "they shall be my peculiar charge as long as I live, and should I die before you return, I will take care that they shall not be left dependent on strangers."

Sandy Grant was now ushered into the room. He was a very fine-looking old man, and dressed in the complete Highland dress. He had served in the Rebellion, under the command of Hector's father; but after that fatal day at Culloden he had remained unmolested, as it was very well ascertained that

many of the deluded people of his class had joined, in order to be with their chiefs, rather than from an idea of the justice of the cause they were engaged in. Sandy was among the number who returned to cultivate his fields, after seeing his beloved Laird set off for France. On his entering the room, he addressed Hector, saying, "Ye're gaun to li'e us, my bonny bairn, I hear," said the agitated old man; "waes me that my eild keeps me frae ganging wi' you! but as I canna gang mysel, I hae brought my son Archy wi' me to tell you that it's his wish and my *pleasure* that he attends you."

Hector was much affected. "I cannot, my kind foster father, agree to this. Do you suppose that I could feel happy at the idea that you and my good nurse were deprived of the comfort of your only son's company? I must insist on his returning with you, or if he does wish to go with me a short distance, he shall accompany me

to Inverness, and bring back the horses I take with me that length."

The old man was firm, and said it was as much his wife's wish as his that their son should follow the fortunes of his choild (foster brother). "I hae brought him wi' me," added the old soldier, "that I might hear him swear in my presence that he wad never li'e you, come weel come wo, and wi' your honour's leave I'll just ca' him up."

He was permitted to do as he wished, and the young man obeyed his father's summons.

He was a very good-looking young man, about a year and a half older than Hector. "Weel, Bauldy," said his father, "I hae just been telling the Laird that its my plesure and your wish that ye shude gang wi' him to the army, and I hae sent for ye into his honour's presence, that I might hear ye swear that ye sall ne'er forsake him for ony ither earthly maister."

A sort of indignant blush tinged the

young man's countenance as he said to the old man, with much feeling, " Ah, feyther, do ye suppose I wad li'e you and my mither for the sake o' being wi' the Laird, and ever think o' gaun to anither maister. Na, na, here I swear afore you and the auld laird himsel', that I never will li'e his honour—that no worldly preferment sall ere tempt me to do it."

" I am satisfied," said the old man. " And now, my bairns, God bless ye baith! I maun gang back to my auld wife.—Sir," said he, turning to Hector, " ye maunna gang to see her;—she sent her blessing to you wi' me, and it wad only bring back sad thoughts, after pairting wi' her ain bairn, for though she pairts wi' him willingly, yet a mither maun feel."

The old man now, with much feeling, bid his son and foster son farewell, and hurried out of the room. Hector followed him, but ere he reached the hall door, the veteran had mounted his little shelty, and was going at a very

quick pace. Archibald was consigned to the care of the servants, where he was well attended to, as they thought they could not be sufficiently kind to one who was sacrificing every tie from attachment to their much-loved master.

The preceding scene will be read with much surprise by many, who will scarce be able to suppose that a man in the decline of life, when in need of the support of his son, could be induced, not only to part with him, but to expose him to all the horrors of war, and that too in the service of one who had it not in his power to reward him. But those readers are not aware of the strong affection which formerly subsisted between the nurse and her foster child, independent of the natural tie between a clansman and his chief; for in both of these relations did Hector stand to Sandy Grant's family—and both these feelings, even to this day, are stronger in that part of the Highlands than in any other.

We shall not attempt to describe the parting between Hector and his aunt—it was that of a mother bidding a last adieu to a beloved child. Alas! it proved so. His uncle accompanied him to Inverness, and recommended him, in the warmest manner, to his colonel, who was there. On bidding his nephew farewell, he told him that he had settled with his colonel, that the first lieutenancy which should become vacant in the regiment was to be purchased for him, means for which he had placed in that gentleman's hands.

“ I knew, my dear boy,” said the good old man, “ that had I offered it to you, you would have refused it from false delicacy. Sorry am I to think that it is all I can do for you. Now, God be wi' you, my boy! you have my sincere prayers; write to us often. Archy,” said he to young Grant, “ take care of your master; fear not for your parents,—I shall take care of them. Goodbye again.”

He rushed out of the room before his nephew had time to stop him, and waved his hand for Hector to return, which he did, and went to his own room, where he was not ashamed to give vent to his feelings. He soon roused himself with the idea that he was now left to his own exertions, and that it would have a strange appearance in the eyes of his brother-officers if he were not to join them. He did so, and soon apparently recovered his composure.

The next day saw him on his way to Edinburgh, where he was not quite a stranger. In due time they embarked, according to their first intention, at Greenock.

Hector constantly wrote to his uncle, and received letters from him in return; but they were of no consequence to this tale, as on one side they only contained details of battle, and on the other domestic occurrences. At length, after a pause of an unusual period,

Hector got the melancholy news of his uncle's death. His wife had died some time before. The letter was written by the clergyman of the parish, to whom Mr. Fraser had left the care of his son, now about fourteen years of age. Previous to his death he had let his farm very advantageously, as he was now getting very infirm, and only reserved the house, garden, and grass for two cows. There was a break in the lease, if Alexander chose to take it himself when he should be of age. The clergyman also mentioned, that Mr. Fraser had marked off half an acre, and left it rent free for ever to Sandy Grant and his heirs; and had even ordered a small cottage to be built on it, which had been just finished at the time the old gentleman died.

Hector continued to write often to the clergyman, but the vicissitudes of war made the safety of the letters very uncertain. The regiment he was in

had come home, but before he could obtain leave of absence, they were ordered to the East Indies. Hector was now a lieutenant, and had little chance of getting promotion, which could only be obtained by money and interest, neither of which he had ; consequently he became disgusted, as he saw striplings put over his head who had never seen a shot fired. Before he left England, he heard from Mr. Grant, saying that his cousin had a wish to become a clergyman, and that he agreed to it, as there was every chance he would be appointed his successor.

Many years elapsed without any accounts of Hector Fraser. His cousin was now a licensed preacher, and assistant to his guardian, who was become very infirm. He still lived with the old man, who had only one daughter, who had the charge of her father's house ever since her mother's death. She was many years older than Alexander Fraser, and treated him as a son. Of-

ten did they speak of his consin Hector, and expressed astonishment that they could obtain no certain information of him. Once a vague report reached them that he had married, but they never had a certainty of it.

They were all seated one evening in the old man's apartment (where he was now for the most part confined), when the servant came in, and said a stranger wanted to speak to her master. "I tauld him," said she, "that my maister ne'er cam' out o' his room to gang to the kirk, and I wasna thinkin' he wad come out to speak to ony ane he ken'd naithing about, and that he maun e'en gi'e his errant to me."

"And what was his errand, Jenny?" said Miss Grant, "for you are keeping him down stairs all this time?"

"'Tweel," said Jenny (very sulkily), "he wadna gi'et to me, but said, since my maister couldna gang to him, he maun come to my maister, for that he had sworn to gi'e his message to nane but the minister of Glenerrach."

“It is most extraordinary,” said the old man; “go down, Sandy, and see what *you* can make of him.”

Sandy went down, and found seated in the kitchen a most respectable-looking man, seemingly about fifty years of age. His complexion bore the marks of a warm climate. He rose up at the entrance of the young messenger, and made a most respectful bow. Alexander asked him to walk into the parlour, which he did.

He was asked to seat himself,—“No, no,” said he, “I know my place better than to sit in the presence of Mr. Sandy Fraser, for my heart tells me you are my dear master’s cousin.”

“Oh,” said Sandy, “you surely must be Archy Grant, who sacrificed so much to accompany my cousin abroad, and whom he has so often and so kindly mentioned when he wrote home. Tell me, Is he alive?”

“No, no,” said the faithful afflicted Archibald, “he is dead,—dead in a foreign land, far far from his own people;

but I saw him decently buried, which is what many who have lost their friends could not say. But, Sir, excuse me, I can say no more till I see the minister myself,—for what I have sworn I must perform.”

Alexander asked him to take some refreshment, whilst he went to prepare Mr. Grant to receive him. It was no easy task, as his memory was much impaired, and it was only when the name of Archy Grant was joined to that of Hector Fraser, that he could be brought to any recollection of him.

The stranger was at last introduced, and Alexander was going to leave the room, when Grant called him back, and told him what he had to say was of consequence for him to know, although he could not be justified in telling it to any one but in the minister's presence at first. “I swore,” said he (turning to the old man), “to my master, that I would travel, if it should be hundreds of miles, but that I should be the one to tell of his fate. Oh, Sir,”

continued he, " my poor master died of a broken heart ; but he has left a legacy to you, and trusted that you would be a guardian to his daughter, as you have been a kind one to his cousin."

" His daughter !" cried the old man ; " we never heard he had one, and only a vague report of his marriage."

" He married," said Archibald, " the daughter of the adjutant ; and if ever there was an angel on earth, she was one. But she was not permitted long to bless her husband, as she died giving birth to her second child, which followed her to the grave. Her first is the one for whom I, at his request, have journeyed many a mile to consign to your care. But I have a letter, written among the last things my master did, which will explain every thing."

He now took out the letter and gave it to Mr. Grant. It seemed from its appearance to have been written for years, which Alexander mentioned.

" Yes," said Archy, " it has been my

companion in every change of situation for the last six years of my life.”

The old man unfolded the letter, but could not read it; he therefore handed it to Alexander, who read as follows:—

“ The young man, dear and reverend Sir, whose mind you assisted to train in a right path, now addresses you from the bed of death. I have put off making this appeal to your feelings till I could almost ascertain that the last action of my life would be to consign my orphan Catherine to your protection. Archibald Grant, my faithful and attached foster-brother and friend, will deliver this and my child to you: he has sworn nothing but death will prevent his doing so. He also will tell you all the misfortunes I have met with,—how my spirit has been subdued by disappointment, and my heart now broken, by the loss of her who was my comfort and solace in every distress. Should my cousin Alexander be still with you, tell him

that I hope he will prove a brother to my child. As to pecuniary matters, she is not entirely destitute, as there is a sum of five hundred pounds vested in the funds in her name, the interest of which is to be payable to her till she be eighteen years of age; and then, should she wish it, the principal can be obtained, and laid out to the best advantage. And now, dear Sir, adieu! Accept the last prayers of your affectionate

“HECTOR FRASER.”

CHAPTER II.

It was with much emotion that Alexander read this letter; and as soon as he had finished it, he turned to Archibald Grant, and asked him where and when he might see his young relation?

“To-morrow, Sir, you shall receive her from my hands; she is to-night lodged in the neighbourhood, with my wife. I shall, with your permission, fulfil the rest of my commission, by informing you of all that has happened to my young master since his departure from the much-loved scenes of Glenerrach.”

It is not requisite to mention these adventures, as they are quite foreign to this story; suffice it to say, that there was scarce a misfortune incident to the

military life that Hector, at some time, had not experienced, and that he bore them all with fortitude. Among the most severe, was the death of his colonel, who had been to him from the first as a father. Archibald, true to his promise at leaving his parents, had never forsaken him, and by his interest he had been made a sergeant, and in that situation conducted himself so well, that on the first opportunity he was made quartermaster-sergeant, and in that rank he obtained his discharge and pension.

He was now come home, he said, to spend his last days in his native glen. He had no surviving family, consequently had enough to support his Mary and himself, who was so devoted to their beloved master's child, that they had come to the determination of adopting her, in the event of the minister's and her cousin's death, as they could not brook the idea of the daugh-

ter of their chief being consigned to strangers. He then shewed all the papers he had relative to Catherine's little fortune, which he gave in charge to the old gentleman. He wished to retire, as he said it did not become him to be a parlour-guest; but he was not permitted, as the gentlemen both declared that they would receive pleasure from his company. Miss Grant was now called, and told the addition which was to be made to their family circle, as it was determined that, for the present at least, Catherine should remain at the manse.

Archibald gave them very entertaining accounts of the campaigns he had been in. He had all the natural shrewdness of the Highland character; and, previous to his going abroad, he had got an education suitable to his station in life, such as reading, writing, and a little arithmetic. These last branches had been improved by the attention

and care of his foster-brother, who, in private, treated him more as a friend than a servant; but that never lessened the natural respect which every Highlander bears to his superior.

It was most astonishing to see the old gentleman; he seemed as if roused from a sleep that he had been in for years. Although for some time back, had you asked him of any occurrence which had taken place within the last three years, his answer would have been very indistinct,—this night ask him any thing of Hector Fraser or his family, and he was quite alive to it.

A bed had been prepared for the worthy sergeant; and it was fixed that he and Alexander should depart early next morning for Mrs. Grant and Catherine. Alexander that night slept but little; he thought of his young cousin, to-whom he had become, at his early years, a sort of guardian; he thought what like she would be; if she

were pretty, &c. He had a reflecting mind, and he also paused to think what would become of her when Mr. Grant should die, which by the course of nature might be expected in a few years. Early next morning he and the sergeant were on their way to the farm where the latter had left his wife and her charge; and by dinner time they were all returned to the manse.

Mrs. Grant was a respectable looking woman, just what you might expect Sergeant Grant's wife to be. Catherine Fraser was about fourteen years of age, and rather tall. She was dark but good-looking,—those who had known her father, thought her like him. Mr. Grant received her as his child, and Miss Grant could not have felt more interested in her if she had been her own. But Catherine was timid and retiring, constantly keeping close to Mrs. Grant, as if she were her only friend. Alexander Fraser made

more than one attempt to enter into conversation with her, but it was vain, as her replies were merely the monosyllables 'Yes,' 'No.' However, ere the hour of her retiring arrived, this reserve wore off, and she became a little more communicative as to her travels, &c. &c.

The elder branches settled that the worthy sergeant should set out in a few days, accompanied by Alexander Fraser, to Edinburgh, where he would arrange every thing relative to Catherine's little fortune, and appoint an agent to receive his pension, and remit it to him, as he had determined to live at his little cottage, which he was to get fitted up in a way more suitable to the comforts he was now able to afford himself. Till the time it would be ready for his reception, they were pressed to take up their abode at the manse. He became a very entertaining companion, in telling of the differ-

ent actions he had been engaged in, but without the least particle of vanity. He also told how, in coming home, the vessel they were in was captured by a French frigate, and carried into Bourdeaux:—"There," added he, "we were detained prisoners for three years. I have no cause to complain of hard usage, for we fell into the hands of very humane people, who gave us as much indulgence as our situation would admit of. I heeded not for myself or my wife,—we were more formed for hard fare; but I grieved for the deprivations my master's child was exposed to. After being some time there, I inquired the character of the commandant's wife; and was informed that she was a very benevolent lady, who did every thing she could to alleviate the distresses of the prisoners. This determined me, and I sought an audience, which was immediately granted to me. I took Miss Fraser along with me, whose story I told her, and regret-

ted that I had now no opportunity of getting her educated as she ought to be, as I could not bear the idea of her mixing with the children of the other prisoners, and I could only remain with those of the same rank as myself. Madam Morant seemed affected with the story; and, through my interpreter, told me not to be uneasy, but to send Mademoiselle every day to her house, where she would instruct her with her own children. By this means, Sir, Miss Fraser is a most excellent French scholar; she was also taught little fancy works, such as embroidery, working lace, &c. She returned to us every day after dinner, when we united our efforts in instructing her in religious matters, according to the Protestant faith; as I had requested Madam Morant not to interfere with her in that respect,—a promise she faithfully kept. My dear master had been at great pains in teaching her the first principles of English reading; and I have

used my humble endeavour not to let her forget that. I also taught her writing and arithmetic, and my wife has made her an excellent needle-woman and knitter; so that, notwithstanding the unsettled life she has led, Miss Fraser is not behind others of her age; though, with your approbation, I think a year at some respectable school would be of great service to her. She has, from the scenes of distress she has often unavoidably witnessed, imbibed a serious cast of character, which I would wish lessened, though not entirely eradicated; and this, I think, could be accomplished by her mixing more with young ladies of her own rank in life. I have never instilled into her mind pride of clothes, or senseless personal vanity, but I have invariably told her to have ever in view that she was descended from a Highland Chieftain, and that she must not look on herself on a footing with those fate had placed her among."

Sandy Fraser did not approve of that part of the conversation; but respecting the motives of the sergeant, who was quite devoted to the head of his mother's clan, he forbore to make any remarks, but dreaded he might, in the character of her guardian, have some trouble in banishing those ideas from his young cousin's mind; but he trusted much to her sweet disposition. Ere the day arrived for the temporary absence of her guardian and cousin, she was quite reconciled to every individual in the manse, and to the idea of its being her future residence.

Before the sergeant set off, he resigned his guardianship, and Catherine being the proper age for electing another, chose her cousin. She lost nothing by being with Miss Grant, who fixed regular hours for her studies; and when these were over, she made her assist in the household duties, as far as her tender years would allow.

On the return of Alexander Fraser

and the sergeant (which was as soon as possible), Alexander shewed all the papers to Mr. Grant, by which it was found that there was near three years interest due, amounting to something more than seventy pounds, which Alexander proposed should be allotted to finishing her education, not to break on the principal, the interest of which was not sufficient to defray all the expense.

The worthy Mr. and Mrs. Grant soon took possession of their snug cottage; and as the distance was but five miles, they often had opportunities of seeing their favourite.

A short time after this, she was sent to Inverness to a friend of Miss Grant's, where she staid and attended the different classes. She remained two years at Inverness, during which time nothing of any moment occurred. At the end of that period we find Catherine once more an inhabitant of the manse. But, alas! all her friends did not welcome her

back,—the kind protector of her infancy was gone. The sergeant had died in consequence of a neglected cold, caught in a fishing excursion.

In the first days of her grief, his widow was taken to the manse, where she remained till Catherine's return. Their meeting was truly affecting. When their feelings at the recollection of the being they both so much loved a little subsided, Mrs. Grant looked with delight at her young charge, whom she found transformed from the growing girl of fourteen to an amiable-looking young woman in her seventeenth year.

Catherine was very soon invested by Miss Grant with the charge of the house, under her direction; and as she was a most excellent manager, in a few months no housewife in the neighbourhood could vie with Catherine Fraser.

She had not been long established at the manse, ere her cousin began to feel himself quite uneasy if by any chance

she were absent for a day. He dreaded making any attempt to gain her affections, fearful that a feeling of gratitude and natural affection might be construed by her into one of a warmer nature, which she might regret afterwards; and he saw nothing in her manner which could entitle him to suppose his addresses would be received. She was uniformly cheerful and contented, and did not seem to have a wish beyond the walls of the manse. Neither had she, for imperceptibly a feeling for her cousin beyond sisterly affection was stealing into her heart; but she was as yet scarcely sensible of it. She was, however, roused from this state of apathy by a proposal of marriage from the son of a neighbour. His father had large sheep farms, and his lease was so very advantageous, that he was *almost*, if not quite as independent as a *laird*.

When she first received the proposal, she felt quite indignant at the idea, and asked Miss Grant, who happened to be

by her when she got the letter, What she thought of the son of Donald Cameron asking her in marriage?

“Why not?” said Miss Grant. “I question if there is a young lady in the neighbourhood who would refuse him.”

“Perhaps not,” said Catherine, “but I can never forget that his grandfather was *my* grandfather’s shepherd.”

“That may be,” said Miss Grant, “but that does not take at all from Allan Cameron’s merit; and if that is all your objection, you ought to endeavour to get over it. He is a most amiable young man; and you ought to recollect, my dear Kate, that those ideas of family pride and clanship are daily weakening, and that a man’s chief merit now is the weight of his purse. But were that Allan’s only merit, I would be far from asking you to give it a second thought, or wish that it would sway you in the least. However, consult your cousin on the sub-

ject ; I should not feel myself justified if I did not inform him of what has passed. You must remember, also, my dear lassie, that by the course of nature my venerable parent cannot live for many years more, and that then I must seek another home ; consequently you cannot remain here. Mistake me not ; I am far, very far from wishing that to influence you ; I only mentioned it to shew you, that if his birth be your only objection, you should give your reason fair play. Have you any dislike to him ?”

“ Far from it ; I think him superior to most of the young men I meet with ; but do you, my dear Miss Grant, tell my cousin, and if he advises me to take him, feeling as I do, I will.”

“ I am convinced,” said Miss Grant, “ that although your cousin is as anxious to see you settled as I am, he will not wish to influence you in a matter of so much importance to your future happiness.”

Catherine was all this day very grave and thoughtful.

In the course of that evening, Miss Grant had a conversation with Alexander. He was a good deal startled at first when she mentioned the subject, and eagerly asked if Catherine had given her consent? Miss Grant told him all that had passed, and that Catherine had declared she would be guided by his opinion.

Alexander walked about the room for some minutes without speaking, and seemingly struggling with his feelings. He at last seated himself by his friend, and asked her if she would listen to him seriously? She said she would, and as far as she could, would give her advice. "Well then," said Alexander, "I love Catherine, and have long done so, but have hitherto forborne to declare myself, thinking she might mistake any preference she may have for me for love, when it may only be natural affection, as she has yet had no opportunity of mixing with or seeing many

other young men, whom perhaps she might think more of afterwards. I shall however speak to her on the subject, but I can never have courage to urge her to take him for the sake of an establishment ; it would be too much for me. I shall tell her what I know of the young man's character, and that if *she* can like him, I am sure he will make her happy."

Miss Grant paused a little, then smiled, and said,—“ I see how it will end, my dear Sandy ; and when I look back at many trifling circumstances, I am astonished at my own blindness. Take my word for it that you will succeed much better if you plead for yourself than for Allan Cameron.”

“ Notwithstanding these flattering words,” said Alexander, “ his cause shall be finally discussed ere I say a word of myself. I would ill discharge the duties of a faithful guardian, did I not point out every advantage likely to arise from such a match.”

Thus ended the conversation, and supper being soon after brought in, Catherine made her appearance. There was a degree of sadness in the expression of her countenance this night which made her look very interesting; she seemed to Alexander as if for the first time she was taking into consideration her future fate. Had he had the art of divination, he could not more clearly have interpreted the thoughts of his artless and hitherto happy cousin. The conversation she had had that day with her maternal friend first made her think of her future fate, and what her orphan state would be exposed to when it should please God to deprive Miss Grant of her father. "Alas!" said she to herself, "how happily have I passed this last year of my life, never once thinking any event could occur to change it! How cruelly have I been roused from this dream of happiness, which in all probability will not last long! I see, I see, I must prepare myself

for new vicissitudes ; yet I am not so destitute as many are, and why should I marry any man for the sake of an establishment ? Far be it from me to do such a thing ! No,—when fate deprives me of this home, my own little pittance will procure me another, much more humble, to be sure, but independent ; and so I shall tell my cousin when he speaks to me of this marriage. Would the conversation were over ! I dread betraying my feelings, and letting him see how dear he is to me.”

Such were the meditations of Catherine when she was summoned to supper : no wonder, then, that her countenance bore that interesting expression observed by her cousin. The supper, which generally consisted of something very simple, was soon over ; and on Catherine bidding her cousin goodnight, after prayers were over, he told her he wished to have some conversation with her next day, after she should have concluded

all her domestic duties. She said she would attend him about one o'clock.

It may readily be supposed that neither of the parties slept much that night; but on the whole, at the breakfast table, Catherine was by far the most composed. Even Miss Grant felt agitated; for, much as she wished to see her young friend richly settled in the world, she could not divest herself of the feelings of family pride (whatever she said to her charge against it), which made her wish rather to see her favourite the wife of Sandy Fraser, though a poor clergyman, than of the rich Allan Cameron, who, although he had every other requisite to make a desirable match, wanted birth, which, in Miss Grant's opinion, was a very great misfortune.

Both Alexander and Catherine were punctual to their hour of meeting; and one o'clock found them seated *tête à tête* in the parlour. It was not without much difficulty that Alexander com-

menced the conversation ; but when he did so, he seemed to gain courage as he proceeded ; and he met with no interruption from his companion, till he had pointed out the advantages of such a match ; concluding by saying, “ So good a son and brother must make a good husband.”

These last words seemed to rouse Catherine, and she said, with much energy, “ It never will be to me that he will make a good husband ; so do not urge me, *Mr. Fraser*, on the subject.”

It was almost the first time in her life that she had called him any thing but Cousin ; and the tone of voice she said it in startled Alexander. He looked at her, and observed a sort of offended dignity (if the expression may be used) in her countenance, at the earnestness with which he pleaded his rival's cause, which seemed to say, “ Did you love me yourself, you could not thus plead for another.” She seemed vexed at her own eagerness, as if fearful the true

state of her heart was laid open to him by her earnest manner, and that her refusal proceeded from that circumstance. She therefore hurried to tell him she was perfectly aware of the merits of Mr. Cameron, but she felt herself happier in her present situation than she could be, married to a man she could not love; and that she had made up her mind never to marry;—that when it should please God to deprive her of her present home, her own little annuity would secure her one, (however humble), where she would live retired, but independent. Here she burst into tears at the bare idea of the event which was to force her to seek another asylum.

Alexander was much affected; he took her hand, and tenderly bid her dry her tears, for that she might be assured that on Allan Cameron's account he never would urge her again. “Indeed,” added he, with much hesitation, “though, as your guardian, I pointed

out the propriety of such a marriage, be assured, had it met your approbation, and however I might rejoice in your happiness, it would have been a mortal blow to my peace of mind."

Catherine's agitation became greater and greater.

Alexander proceeded, and fully declared his feelings for her,—nay, what they had long been; but that he had suppressed them, till he should know her resolutions relative to Allan Cameron. Her refusal now of his addresses gave him some hopes that, though not so rich, she might look on him with a more favourable eye.

It is not requisite to enter minutely into this conversation: it is sufficient to say, that ere they parted Catherine promised to become the wife of Alexander Fraser.

As soon as she left him, he sought his kind friend Miss Grant. She could not think what had happened him, when he caught her in his arms, and

bid her congratulate him. When he had fully explained himself, she did congratulate him with tears in her eyes, and said she must go in search of her lassie, whom she found in her own little room, giving vent to her suppressed emotions. On seeing her maternal friend, she threw her arms round her neck, and hid her blushing face in her bosom, exclaiming—" Oh ! my more than mother, I fear I have exposed myself to my cousin ; and that no warmer feeling than compassion makes him seek my hand."

Miss Grant set her right on this subject ; and after an interesting conversation for near an hour, they joined Alexander in the dining-room.

It may easily be believed that they had no reserves with Miss Grant ; and that even in her presence, Alexander urged his cousin to name an early day for becoming his wife. She felt a good deal embarrassed ; and to relieve her in some measure, Miss Grant said to her,

half laughing—"Dinna forget, wi' a' this, my bairn, that ye maun send an answer to Mr. Cameron's letter: it's no right to keep him in a swither about your taking him."

Catherine said she would answer his letter next day, which was as soon as he could have expected a reply. She did so; and wrote him as polite a rejection as she could,—at the same time telling him candidly that her affections were engaged, and hinted to whom. She added, that although she could not return his affections, she would always look on him as a friend, and regard him as such.

Alexander proposed that she herself should communicate her intended marriage to her kind and affectionate friend Mrs. Sergeant Grant; and that as his parochial duties would call him that road next day, he would accompany her so far,—leave her there for a short time,—and call for her on his return.

He may have been a little selfish in

this arrangement ; for this was almost the only method he could contrive to have an uninterrupted conversation with her, Miss Grant, good soul, never being away from them. At the same time, we must do her the justice to say that curiosity was not her motive ; but merely a wish to give her opinion on their future plans. But there were other reasons for his wishing to have an uninterrupted conversation with Catherine in Mrs. Grant's presence : he wished to get her aid,—to tell her the true state of Mr. Grant's health,—and to say that the period of Miss Grant's being deprived of her home was nearer than she (Catherine) seemed aware of. This, delicacy forbade him to do in Miss Grant's presence.

Nothing intervened to prevent their intended excursion, and next morning, after breakfast, they mounted their ponies, and less than an hour brought them to the cottage. Mrs. Grant was always delighted to see her favourite ;

and hearing Mr. Fraser was to prolong his ride, she told him that if he would honour her so far as to take a bit of dinner with her on his return, she would have it in good time, and they could ride home in the cool of the evening. Alexander cheerfully assented, and left his bride to tell her own story. Their simple meal, consisting of a stoved fowl with some ham and eggs, was soon put in order by the direction of Mrs. Grant to a niece she had staying with her, and she then gave her entire attention to her "darling lassie," as she always called Catherine.

It was not without a good deal of embarrassment that Catherine told Mrs. Grant how she was situated with her cousin. As soon as the good woman perfectly comprehended the case, she clasped her hands in a sort of extasy, and exclaimed—"Thank God, that ere I die I shall have the comfort of seeing my beloved child happily settled in

life!" She had scarce testified her joy sufficiently (as she said herself) ere Mr. Fraser arrived. Her transports were renewed on seeing him, and it was a long time before she could behave at all in a rational manner. Alexander roused her by saying he was impatient for dinner, as he had had a long ride.

As soon as this comfortable meal was over, Alexander commenced the subject nearest his heart, by asking Mrs. Grant to assist him in trying to prevail on Catherine to name an early day for becoming his wife. He stated many reasons, and spoke so feelingly of what her situation and Miss Grant's would be at the demise of the old gentleman (unless before that period he was her legal protector), that Catherine was quite overcome.

"Enough, Alexander," said she, holding out her hand—"say no more; I here promise that this day month I shall become your wife."

Alexander was delighted, and Mrs. Grant could not command her feelings. "Oh! had my Archibald but lived to see this day—to see the happy prospects you have!—But let me not re-pine."

Catherine made Mrs. Grant promise to say nothing of the marriage, as she wished every thing to be conducted with the greatest privacy, owing to the state of the minister's health. She also made her promise to come to the manse a week before the ceremony; but this would excite no surprise, as she was in the habit of doing so often.

Miss Grant expressed great delight at the information Alexander gave her on his return.

The few necessary preparations Catherine had to make were completed ere the happy day arrived. A neighbouring clergyman performed the ceremony, for worthy Mr. Grant was by this time in such a state of debility of mind as well as body, that he was in-

capable; and it was almost impossible to make him comprehend that any change was to take place in the family. Indeed, to a more acute observer, the change was scarce to be noticed, except that for about a fortnight there were more visitors than usual, as Catherine continued to take the same charge she had ever done.

Two months after the marriage Mr. Grant expired, and so easy was his passage from this life to another, that the transition was scarce perceptible.

It was now that Catherine rejoiced she had a home to offer to Miss Grant in lieu of the one *she* had long granted her. She had no near relations, and indeed she was so fond of both Alexander and his wife, that she was easily prevailed on to take up her abode with them. The household furniture and stock on the farm were hers, and as the latter were of a valuable kind, when they were appraised the whole came to about three hundred pounds. This

Alexander offered to pay her immediately, but she preferred leaving it in his hands for the present. The interest he also was to reserve, as a sort of equivalent for her board. Two hundred pounds she had of money she sunk for double interest, which was a good addition to her income.

Alexander and his wife were now settled in a much more independent manner than most of the Highland clergymen. Besides his stipend, and the interest of his wife's little fortune, which was now out on heritable security, he had his farm let for a little more than one hundred pounds a-year, and the savings he had made from the time he became Mr. Grant's assistant were more than sufficient for what he was to pay both for stock and furniture; but this he placed so that he put it out of his power to touch it; also that he might easily command it if Miss Grant wished for it at any time.

At the expiration of the first year of

their marriage, their happiness was increased by the birth of a son; and by the time they were nine years married, they saw themselves the happy parents of six children, five of whom attained the age of maturity.

Alexander and his wife, on finding their family increase so rapidly, had laid down a system of economy which enabled them to make provision for them. They never touched the rent of their little farm, but allowed it to accumulate, which, with his wife's fortune, the principal of which was kept sacred, he was aware would enable them to educate them, and also help to forward the sons.

Miss Grant lived till the youngest of the family was four years of age; she left her money to the oldest son, the interest of it to accumulate till he was old enough to make choice of a profession, and then, if he chose the church, it was to pay his expenses at college; and if not, he was empowered to get

it when eighteen, to bring him forward in any other profession he chose.

Mrs. Sergeant Grant saw three of her young favourite's children, and then died, much respected by all who knew her, leaving her cottage to her niece, who had been for some time married to the parochial schoolmaster. Their income was much increased by several of the farmers at a distance boarding their children with them.

Mr. and Mrs. Fraser educated their family in a most rational manner. After a good foundation had been laid at home by their respectable parents, the boys were sent to college, and the two girls passed each two years successively at Inverness, attending classes. The last six months they saw company, and as the society of that town is very superior, they acquired an ease of manner seldom to be met with.

Their several propensities were consulted in teaching them the finer branches. Catherine had a taste for

drawing, which was cultivated by the most eminent masters of Inverness; and Elizabeth, whose voice was good, and having a fine ear, was instructed in music. Archibald, the eldest son, was on the eve of being licensed as a preacher. Hector, the second son, was a midshipman, and now with his frigate. Alexander, the youngest, had received a college education, but as yet had fixed on no profession; his ambition being to go to India, could he get it accomplished. His father had received many promises, but as yet none of them had been fulfilled.

As soon as the two daughters were returned from Inverness, their mother gave up the entire management of the house to them, which they conducted in a most admirable manner. In short, their education had been such, that they were fitted to shine in domestic life, either in an humble or an exalted station.

The number of travellers constantly going to that amazing work, the Caledo-

nian Canal, brought a great concourse of strangers to Mr. Fraser's house, which was just on the way. This circumstance tended to give an ease of manner to the Misses Fraser, which no doubt astonished the two Englishmen on their first introduction.

We shall now take up the story where we left off.

CHAPTER III.

THE morning verified the predictions of the old gentleman,—it was a perfect storm; but I am not sure that the travellers were disappointed—certainly the young ladies (especially Elizabeth) were not.

It will be expected that, before I go further, I should give a description of my two heroines. Never was there a greater contrast between sisters, in looks and in figure. Catherine was in her twentieth year, tall and fair; though not a regular beauty, there was something in her whole appearance extremely prepossessing. Elizabeth was just eighteen years of age, little and quite a brunette; all life and vivacity, never looking a moment beyond the

passing hour. Catherine, on the contrary, was of a very grave cast of character.

The two gentlemen, on going down stairs, were met by a servant, who conducted them to a different room to where they had been the preceding night, where breakfast was laid out. They were soon joined by Mr. Fraser, who gave them the morning salutation with much cordiality; and in a quarter of an hour the whole party were seated at a breakfast-table, so profusely served, as would have excited astonishment in the Englishmen, had they not been accustomed to it for the last few weeks.

After a very stormy morning, the day cleared up sufficiently about two o'clock to enable the strangers to view the romantic scenery of Glenerrach. In this excursion they were attended by both the young men of the family, whose sensible and animated conversation convinced their visitors that they

had profited by the pains which their father had taken on their education.

Alexander told them, that if they were keen sportsmen, and could be prevailed on to stay a few days longer, he would shew them as fine a moor as they had ever met with.

Morris answered for himself and his friend, that it was not requisite to hold out such an inducement as that to tempt them to prolong their stay in a place where every thing conduced to make them happy.

On their return from their walk, about three o'clock, they found Mrs. Fraser and her daughter Elizabeth ready to receive them;—the former busy knitting, and the latter doing some needle-work. Henly observed a piano in the room, and asked Elizabeth to favour them with some music. She played some little pieces with considerable taste; and on Henly asking her for a song, she gave one or two of Burns's best in a pleasing way. On his

asking for some of her Highland songs, she laughingly expressed her astonishment at his wishing to hear songs in a language of which he did not understand a word. But he told her, that from the time he had first heard a Gaelic air, he had been delighted with them, there was so much plaintiveness and melody in the most of them. Elizabeth's voice was peculiarly well adapted to this style of music, and Henly was enraptured.

A plain excellent dinner was served exactly at four o'clock. There was no apology made for the simplicity of the fare; the old gentleman merely told them, that being far from market, they were obliged to have resources within themselves; that the mutton was from their own hill, and the fowls from their own barn-yard. After dinner there was some excellent home-brewed wine, and a bottle of good port set on the table, besides some of the best whiskey to be had any where.

“ I would wish to shew you, gentlemen,” said Mr. Fraser, “ that the Scotch clergymen know good wine as well as their brethren in England, though they cannot afford, perhaps, to drink so much of it. Yet I always contrive to have a bottle of the best for my friends. As for the home-made, I shall only say, that my good old Kate there will not yield even to the famous *Mrs. Primrose* in her gooseberry wine.”

The gentlemen laughed at this eulogium on the good old lady, in which she joined them. They gave all due praise to the different sorts of wine, but said they had been too long in the Highlands not to have imbibed a taste for its native beverage, whiskey.

Morris and Henly found themselves so comfortable, that ere the party separated for the night, they had promised the old gentleman to pass ten days with him;—it was a matter of no moment to them where they spent their

time till the end of November, when they were obliged to be in London.

After they retired to their room this night, Henly was very grave for some time; at last he was roused by Morris taking an immoderate fit of laughing.

“What do you laugh at?” said Henly.

“At you,” said the other, “who seemed this day to have no eyes or ears for any one but Elizabeth. But take care,” added he, seriously, “how you trifle with the affections of an amiable girl; it would be but a poor return for the unparalleled hospitality we have met with, to render any individual of the family unhappy; and I already plainly see that the girl is pleased with your attentions.”

“That information,” dear Morris, said Henly, eagerly, “does away any resentment I felt at the idea of your supposing that I would endeavour to gain the affections of such a girl as Elizabeth Fraser, without being serious in my resolution of asking her of her father. Nay, listen to me,” (seeing the other

was going to interrupt him)—“ I know all you would say, that you have seen me as much smitten before ;—it may be so, but I assure you, I never felt for any one what I do for this girl ; and it would make me inexpressibly unhappy, did I suppose, after leaving this, that I were never to see her again. You are aware that I am entirely my own master,—that my fortune is independent,—so much so, that I need not look for money with my wife. Elizabeth is a gentlewoman by birth, and you must observe that she is so in manner also.”

“ I know all this” said Morris, “ but for the sake of your own future happiness, I would recommend a further knowledge of the temper and disposition of the lady, before you give way to your feelings.”

“ Pho ! pho !” said Henly, “ you cannot be a judge of my feelings. You have, from your earliest age, looked on my sister Maria as your affianced wife, so that you would have deemed it a sin

to admire any other woman. This has kept your feelings so much under the guidance of reason, that you are almost a stoic; and she is as grave as yourself. But my resolution is fixed. If I find I can make myself agreeable to the fair Elizabeth, I shall attack the old gentleman,—be out of suspense at once, and then a fig for all care! But, good-night, I am not in a humour for more moralising at present.”

Although Catherine’s name was not mentioned in the preceding conversation, we are not to suppose that she had not been as much noticed as Elizabeth during the evening, or had excluded herself; neither was the case, but she was occupied with the household concerns, a duty they took alternately; consequently in the early part of the day she had not been much with them; but in the evening they had her undivided attention, and much did she delight them with her conversation.

Morris (with whom she mostly chat-

ted) afterwards declared to her father that he had seldom or ever met with any young lady of her general knowledge in history and biography.

The fond father's eyes glistened at this praise of his darling child. "She truly is," said he, "a comfort to us all; but you as a stranger cannot know her value, although her judgment is such, that no individual in the family (and I among the rest) would take any step of consequence without consulting her; yet where she alone is concerned, she yields to us all, although we are aware she makes a sacrifice of her own feelings. Nor does she murmur;—no, as she has given up her hopes of happiness for a time, agreeable to her mother's wishes and mine, she does it cheerfully; nor have I any reason to suppose that she thinks she does more than her duty. But what I say must be an enigma to you; but if you will give me leave, I shall explain it. My daughter Kate and the son of one of my neighbours, from the

time they could know each other's value, have been attached. You know my girl, and when I tell you that Allan Cameron is worthy of her, you may judge what he is ;—indeed, not one of my own children is dearer to me. He is a lieutenant in the 79th, and just now at home on leave of absence, to recruit his health, which had suffered from a wound he had received in the Peninsula. Ever since he has been at home, he has been urging me to give my consent to an immediate marriage. Nor do I believe my daughter was averse to it; but I painted so strongly the dreadful miseries officers' wives were exposed to at the seat of war (and she is too dutiful to remain behind), that she has not only acceded to our wishes in putting off her marriage till he can remain at home with honour to himself, but has used all her influence to reconcile Allan to his disappointment. Dear girl!—she has a severe struggle before her, as her lover is to leave this

in a few weeks. But she has a firm mind, and has often told me, that not a day passed without her thinking of it, in order to accustom herself to the idea of the separation.”

This conversation took place one day as the whole party (except the old lady) were returning from viewing a remarkable cascade about a mile from the house. Morris and the old gentleman had loitered behind. Henly and Elizabeth were laughing away with all the thoughtlessness of youth, nor could all Catherine said restrain her.

Her father was within hearing of her laugh, and turning to Morris, he exclaimed—“ Listen to that dear lively lassie ;—no thought or care for the future has she ; her motto is, to enjoy the present moment. I trust her path will not be strewed with thorns, for there never was a being less prepared for it.”

It looked as if the spirit of divination had come across the good old man,

and that with his *mind's eye* he had seen the troubles and distress his now thoughtless but innocent daughter was to meet with.—But we must not anticipate.

In order to make the time pass as agreeably as possible to his two guests, Mr. Fraser had all his nearest and most respectable neighbours at the manse, and his family was invited back in return. Sometimes the young ladies were of these parties and sometimes not; Alexander always was.

Mr. Cameron's house was one of those to which the ladies accompanied them. His three daughters (lively girls), and some other visitors, with the Frasers and their friends, formed a tolerable set for a dance. Nor was the opportunity lost; a piper was soon procured, and they kept it up till a pretty late, or rather early hour. Mr. Cameron was the same gentleman whose addresses Mrs. Fraser had refused. He some time afterwards married a very amiable young woman,

and by her had a family of three daughters and a son.

The greatest intimacy had always been kept up between the families of Ardveorlich and Glenerrach; the consequence was the idea of a double marriage in the family, viz. Allan Cameron and Catherine Fraser; and it was hinted among the young people that Archy Fraser and Anne Cameron would follow their example as soon as he could obtain a living.

Old Mr. Cameron had wished this his only son to have remained at home; but Allan representing to his father what a shame it would be for a young man like him to remain inactive when his country was so much in want of soldiers, the old man had at last agreed, and purchased an ensigncy for him in Cameron's regiment, in which he had signalized himself more than once, and was now high up among the lieutenants.

The house of Ardveorlich was modernly built, and consequently could

accommodate a great number of guests, and Morris and Henly were not surprised when they heard the whole party were to remain.

As usual, the two Englishmen were in the same room; they had now been so long accustomed to it, that it would have been a matter of regret had they not had an opportunity of talking over the events of the evening, before they slept.

On this night Henly was uncommonly loquacious on the subject of Allan Cameron and Catherine.—“ Hang him !” said he, “ he does not deserve so fine a girl; and when I come to ask the old gentleman’s consent, I’ll be whipped if he will get me to put off my marriage a single week to please him.”

“ When you ask his consent !” said Morris. “ Surely it has not come that length yet? you cannot be so rash as to think of forming so serious a connexion on so short an acquaintance?”

“ It is too late now to say a word,” said Henly ; “ I have not only declared myself to dear Elizabeth, but have got her permission to apply to her parents. She looked so fascinating this evening at the dance, that I could resist it no longer ; and I now sincerely wish for our return to the manse, to have my suspense ended.”

“ Well, well,” said Morris, “ as you say, it is too late ; but I think Elizabeth has been as rash in receiving your offer as you have been in making it. What does she know of your temper and disposition ? I should not be at all surprised if the old gentleman withheld his consent, at least for some time.”

“ Being a little afraid of that, I have got the dear girl’s promise to marry without it. We are both of one mind, to enjoy the present, and never to anticipate evil. I have every idea that Elizabeth Fraser and I will be as happy a couple as if we had taken years to consider of it.’

“Rash unthinking Henly!” said Morris. “I shall say no more, but that I trust you may never have cause to repent this precipitance. But as matters have gone so far, I shall do all I can to prevail on the old gentleman to give his sanction, and I shall say every thing I can in your favour.”

“That I am sure you will,” said Henly, “for your own sake, as people are generally known by the company they keep.”

Here the conversation ended.

The two sisters of course occupied the same apartment; and, in Elizabeth’s opinion at least, it was fortunate that they occupied it alone. Her heart panted to inform Catherine of her happiness.

After some very natural timidity, Elizabeth told her sister that that evening Henly had declared himself her lover, and had obtained her leave to apply to her parents.

In place of rejoicing as her sister ex-

pected, Catherine turned pale, and exclaimed,—“ Is it possible, my dear sister that you can have agreed to marry a man who is almost a total stranger to you ? What will your father think ? ”

“ Well, I hope,” said Elizabeth gravely, “ as my happiness depends on it. I may have been rash, but I cannot suppose but that Henly is every thing he seems, which is generous and honourable. You have never thought of conversing much with him, being always more taken up with Mr. Morris, who, I grant you, is a little more sedate than my hero ; but does not the very circumstance of his intimacy with Morris speak in his favour ? ”

“ It certainly does,” said Catherine, “ and I trust, my dearest sister, you will be happy ; believe me when I tell you that all I said to-night proceeded from my anxiety for you.”

“ I am convinced of it, my dear Kate,” said Elizabeth, embracing her. “ Would I could see you and your Ca-

meron as near happiness ; for that my father will refuse his consent I never can suppose.”

“ Say not a word on that subject if you love me, Bess,” said Catherine. “ I have formed my resolution from a firm conviction of its being most for my peace of mind. Well do I remember hearing from my mother what Mrs. Grant told her, of all that the officers’ wives suffered during a campaign, and how much it often interfered with the husbands’ military duty, the care and attention he was obliged to bestow on his wife and family. When I think of all this can I regret sparing Allan that pang ? Never, never ; and though I am convinced his feelings will be severely tried at bidding me farewell, yet his own sense must convince him how much better it is that he should do so in my father’s house than on the field of battle, where the uncertainty of what would be my fate in the event of his falling would add to the pangs of separation.

No," added Catherine firmly, "although I do not deny that my feelings are severely tried, I am convinced that I act for the best."

The most of the party who were now assembled were to meet in a few days at the manse to celebrate the harvest-home. There were also to be present the most respectable of the parishioners of the lower rank in the vicinity of the manse; indeed it was a festival principally for them.

Henly was eager to return to Glenerach, and the party broke up about two o'clock. Allan accompanied the party to the manse, where he was to stay for a week previous to his leaving the country. The old people received them with as much warmth as if they had been a month in place of a day absent.

It may readily be supposed that Henly took the first opportunity of speaking to Mr. Fraser on the subject nearest his heart. The good old man was astonished, and said all he could

to persuade George to put off the marriage for a couple of years at least. All would not do, and he at last succeeded in obtaining his consent; but in giving it he said he could not help saying a few words on the danger of such precipitance, and hoped they never might have cause to repent of it.

“ You and my daughter,” added he, “ are almost strangers to each other; to your several tempers quite so—not that I would wish to take any merit from you, far less from my own child.—But the very circumstance of both of you being so quickly caught, shews an impetuosity of feeling dangerous to the possessors, as it tends to make them give way to appearances, whether favourable or the reverse, and to judge without reflection. Notwithstanding this I trust you will be happy. Go, my dear sir, lead my child to me, that I may give you both my blessing.”

Henly was a good deal affected at the solemn manner in which the good old

man spoke, but left the room in search of Elizabeth. He found her in the parlour in a state of great agitation, knowing, as she did, the subject on which her father and Henly were engaged. He told her his errand ; she trembled, but accompanied him to her father's closet, where she found also her mother, to whom Mr. Fraser had imparted what had passed, and who, it may easily be supposed, rejoiced at this promised splendid establishment for her darling child. Elizabeth's parents embraced her and Henly, and gave them their blessing in a most impressive manner, which they received kneeling.

Mr. Fraser told his daughter that she had been educated in such strict ideas of religion that he had no fears for her principles, but bid her beware of the examples she would meet with in the great world, to which she was so total a stranger, and by which, no doubt, her lively mind would be so soon fascinated. " But, my dear child,"

said he, "ever have it in view that this world is only preparatory to another, and never follow the multitude to do evil—by which you would bring down the grey hairs of your parents with sorrow to the grave."

Elizabeth was much affected, and soon after this went to her own room, where she was shortly joined by Catherine, to whom she told all that had passed.

By dinner time all those most nearly interested had heard of what was going on, and however Henly and Elizabeth might at first have felt the impressive way Mr. Fraser spoke to them, there were none at the table who seemed more lively than they were.

A few days after this was to be the rustic ball, preparations for which were making in the cooking line under the superintendence of Catherine. Two or three sheep had been sacrificed, nor were the poultry spared. Although the preparations would not vie with

those for more refined parties in point of delicacies, as far as good substantial food went, nothing could exceed it. Mutton dressed in various ways, poultry of all kinds, bacon ham, &c. In short, it was a feast fit for the honest-hearted people who were to partake of it.

Elizabeth did not permit herself to be so taken up with her own happiness as to neglect giving her aid to her sister, and we will not deny that now and then a pang of regret obtruded itself, when she considered that in all probability it would be the last she would assist at.

During this time the gentlemen frequently amused themselves by strolling among the hills, sometimes accompanied by one or other of the young Frasers, and sometimes by Allan Cameron.

One day they were so accompanied, when accident brought them on a tract they had never been before, although

it seemed quite familiar to their companion. In a little while Henly complained of fatigue, and Allan told him if he would exert himself a little longer he would take him where he could rest himself comfortably. In a short time they came to a hut, similar to those they had often met with in the hills, which were tenanted by under-shepherds, but this one had a very neat appearance outside.

Allan went in first, and gave the usual salutation in his native language. He was answered by an old man who seemed confined to his chair from rheumatism. A woman, nearly as old as himself, sat beside him, and a young girl was seated at her wheel on the other side of the fire-place. On the appearance of the other two gentlemen the women rose from their seats, and the old man pulled off his bonnet, which was the only means by which he could testify his respect.

Allan said some words in the Gaelic

language, and in a moment the young girl set three seats for the gentlemen.

Morris asked the old man what his complaints were?

He looked as if he partly understood the question, but seemed ashamed of his want of the English language. He at last said—

“Me no be able ta speak ta Sassenach weel aneugh, wi’ your leave, but I ha’e had rheumaticks for mony a month. Oich ! oich ! me no ken fat to doe binna for ta mhinister’s guid kind dochters.”

“You know the young ladies then?” said Morris, wishing to draw the old man into conversation, as he knew by this means their true character would be laid open.

The old man did not seem quite to understand, but Allan explained.

“Ken tem ! Ohone ! shurely me do. Ta blessing of Dhia (God) be on ta twa shewels, for a’ dey hae dune for me

agus (and) ma bhein (wife) agus bairns. Oh! oh! Maister Allan, you be de lucky man, for ta be shure Miss Kate be de gude gude lass."

Morris said he thought her sister a very fine girl too. This also needed explanation.

" Oh, ta be shure she be, and her kind and gude to my bhein and bairn; she be comin whilst, and he gi'e us sil-ler, and she gi'e us claise, and she read ta Bible to us, for ohone! we canna' read oursels. But she no like her ain sister; she no tak ta muckle time to speak, but rins awa wi' her light heart, and light may it aye be! But Miss Kate, her learn me and my bhein there a' we ken o' our God; agus she learn tat lass there ta read and say her carritch; her gets spinnin' for my oe, and her sells ta yarn and buys ta meal and kitchen for our puntates. Agus Maister Allan, do ye no ken tat hersel' spak to you, and did na ye sen' a man to delve our

kail yard in lentreu when I was bedrid?
Weel weel do I ken ye baith, and my
blessing be on you, for ye're our gude
for this world!"

CHAPTER IV.

ALLAN was now anxious to change the conversation, as it was becoming personal, and said something in Gaelic to old Donald, which seemed both to surprise and delight him. He immediately turned to Henly, saying—"Y'ere gaun to tak awa Miss Lizabeth ta say; I'm hopan I hae said naithing that y'ere honor will tak ill; for, weel a wat, it wad ill set me, or ony o' my kin, to say ocht o' the blessed lassie but gude. But I'll no say for a' tat, but I like Miss Kate best; but, troth, ye hae my blessing, and dat o' a' ta puir o' ta parish, wi' her; and I wad be fain, gif I was able, to hirple til see her afore she gaed awa."

Henly was delighted at the old man's independence of spirit, who seemed to disdain drawing back from what he

had said of the sisters before he knew of his intention of marrying Elizabeth. He told old Donald that Miss Lizzy would come to see him before she left Glenerrach.

The gentlemen having now sufficiently rested themselves, prepared to leave the hut. Morris and Henly gave substantial proofs of their satisfaction, and left the worthy couple richer than they had been for some time.

On their way home, Allan let them into the history of the old man. He had been herd to a neighbouring farmer, who sent him off when he was no longer able to work, thinking he had sufficiently remunerated him for the service of the best days of his life, by giving him about a quarter of an acre of ground for his potatoes and kail-yard, and assisting him to build the hut he now inhabited. He had had two sons, but being both wild and dissipated, they had enlisted at Inverness, where they had gone with their father

with some cattle. One of them had been married, and was father to the girl now living with him. The old man took his daughter-in-law and child home to his own house; and, to do the young woman justice, she was of all the use she could to the old couple, (when they were dismissed from their service, which was soon afterwards), even to digging the garden, and planting their kail and potatoes. But heart-break impaired her constitution, and she was at last obliged to take her bed. "It was then the family at the manse first heard of their distress, and the minister and his daughters went to see them. The consequence you know from the grateful effusions of the old man's heart, although he could lamely express himself. The taste for neatness and cleanliness that she instilled into Jeannie (qualifications not often to be met with among the lower class of Highlanders) were not the least beneficial aid they had received. It is wonderful

what that young creature does. For one or two days, perhaps, some charitable neighbour will assist her in digging the garden, but that is all."

"Pray," said Morris, "is there no parochial aid given to people in that situation?"

Allan smiled. "It is fortunate you did not ask this question of the old man himself. I think it would have required all his philosophy to have given you a proper answer. There certainly is in every parish a fund, under the controul of the clergymen and elders (church-wardens, as you call them in England), for the relief of the indigent of the parish; but the inherent pride of a Highlander is such, that nothing but the most abject misery will allow him to accept of it, as it is the pride and boast of their friends, after their death, that they never got any thing from the parish; and the reverse is an everlasting reproach, especially if

they have any one at all able to work for them, as this old man has his grand-daughter, who, in her own person, would put up with any deprivation, rather than that should be the case. It is astonishing what deprivations a true Highlander can put up with. It is a well ascertained fact, that many a poor creature, such as we saw to-day, will live for weeks on potatoes and kail, unless when near the sea, and that they have an opportunity of getting shell-fish."

"Your account surprises me very much," said Morris. "Now, with us, a man, when he is past working for his support, without any hesitation comes on the parish, who are not only obliged to give him aid, but to support his family also."

"I can account for it in no other way," said Allan, "than by the different way the peasantry live in England and in the Highlands. The first live a great deal better; so that in their old

age they must accept of aid to procure what they call necessaries, but which a true bred Highlander calls luxuries, and, consequently, never aspires to. They think themselves rich, when they have a roof to cover them, however poor their fare. But I speak only of the Highlanders in the districts far from towns. The peasantry of Scotland, in other situations, are as distinct from them as they are from the peasantry of England; but one and all of them never think of asking parochial aid, till necessity compels them."

Henly asked if the old man had ever heard of his sons?

"No," said Allan, "nor could he hope to hear good of the profligates."

Dinner waited for them on their return, during which Morris told Catherine (whom he now looked on with a sort of reverence) where he had been, and that they had been listening to her praise.

She blushed, and told him he must

not believe all that so partial a person would say of her. "They truly are," added she, "a worthy couple, and their innate piety and religious ideas would shame those who have had better opportunities."

The evening of the rustic festival now arrived. During the forenoon of that day the families at the greatest distance appeared at the manse; and what surprised the Englishmen very much, a number of them brought presents to the minister's wife, of different degrees of value, according to their ability, from a few dozens of eggs to a sheep or lamb.

Morris, who of the two travellers was most observant of the manners and customs of the country he was now in, expressed his surprise at this to Allan Cameron and the old gentleman. They smiled, and said that there was no season of the year they could have arrived in the Highlands more proper than the present to see the character of the

inhabitants and the mutual dependence between the minister of a country parish and his parishioners.

“ I,” added Mr. Fraser, “ am particularly blessed with the charge of a kind and good set of people, and under peculiar obligations to them. Their farms being mostly grazing or sheep-farms, they have not much corn to cut down ; but when their own harvest is over, they come in parties to assist me. In the same way they cut my turf, and lead it home, for all which they will accept of no pecuniary reward ; and the only way I can return their kindness is by this *kirn*, or harvest-home, as you would call it. Now and then a bottle of wine to a sick neighbour, or a little tea and sugar to their wives during their confinement, or a few articles of baby-linen, made up by my daughters, for some of the poorer sort occasionally ; (but I am not indeed often called on in that way.) I give my advice in any little quarrels they may have among

themselves; and having when at college studied physic, I am thus able to prescribe for them in that way also. But, thank God, my medical qualifications are as seldom in requisition as my legal ones, for the inhabitants of Glenerrach are a hardy race, and honesty and temperance are great enemies to the professors of law and physic. This kirk, therefore, is the only fixed reward I have it in my power to give them; and even in this you would suppose they still wished me to be their debtor, as, except the little additional trouble, I am, in a manner, a gainer by it, as, for the most part, more presents are brought in than will make up for the slaughter in the poultry-yard," &c.

"When I see," said Morris, in reply to this statement, "the close connexion between the Scotch clergyman and his parishioners, I am no longer surprised at the superiority the morals of the lower class of this country have

over those of the same rank in England. There, how different! Perhaps only once in a month or six weeks does the clergyman appear at his parish church, during which interval he passes his time gaily, and leaves the most important part of his duty to be performed by a poor curate, who receives perhaps forty or fifty pounds a-year, from a living of some hundreds. Is it to be supposed that the morals of these people can be attended to? Impossible; and had I a son who was inclined for the church, far rather would I see him a Scotch clergyman, beloved and respected by his parishioners, than with a living of four times its value in England."

Mr. Fraser smiled at the warmth with which Morris spoke, and said—"My dear Sir, you are not to judge of the mass of the Scottish clergymen and their parishioners by what you have seen in the Highlands. With us, necessity first, and affection afterwards, forms this connexion. Look at those

in great towns, and in their neighbourhood, where it is quite different. The minister gets labourers for hire—the farmers take their produce to market; in fact, they are quite independent of each other; so much so, that when the clergyman placed by the patron does not please the parish in general, from his doctrine, or any other cause not at all connected with his moral character, they, without hesitation, erect a new church, place there a clergyman of their own selection, and pay him by a voluntary subscription.”

This conversation took place after the young ladies had left the table, accompanied by their mother, brothers, and Henly, to receive their guests in the barn, and to see that every thing was in proper order.

The three gentlemen now adjourned there, where they found the dance ready to commence by a reel, consisting of the two Misses Fraser and two of the oldest men present.

Henly had asked Elizabeth in the morning to be his partner, but she told him that for that night they must mix as much as possible with their guests, and that he must find partners among the rosy-cheeked daughters of the farmers and shepherds present; she would dance little, but that little must be among their guests principally, "as it would give very great offence," added she, "at an entertainment like this, given principally to themselves, if we were to keep aloof."

From the time that the dancing had seriously commenced, Henly saw that Elizabeth's account had been correct, as the young gentlemen of the party never asked the Misses Fraser, or the other young ladies, but took partners from among the wives and daughters of the farmers and shepherds.

The Misses Frasers and their friends paid every attention to the comfort of the seniors of the party, and now and then danced reels with some of the old

men, whose activity at that exercise astonished the strangers.

The men were in general dressed in the Highland garb, especially the old ones, who would have thought themselves disgraced in being asked to appear in the costume of the present day. Among the oldest of the women were also seen some with the curch, and one or two had on a *tonag*, which was a small piece of tartan, worn round the shoulders, and fastened in front by a large silver brooch, which in all probability had been handed down from generation to generation for centuries.

Mr. and Mrs. Fraser amused themselves chatting with all the old people, and looking with delight on the happy faces around them.

Weak punch was handed about occasionally, with bread and cheese, to the whole party.

About twelve o'clock the minister selected a partner from among the oldest of the women, and one of the old men

took out Mrs. Fraser. They all acquitted themselves well.

This was a signal unintelligible at first to the strangers, till in a short time they saw some of the young men come in bearing empty barrels, and other supporters, for several planks carried in by others; and in less time than could have been imagined, a party of the young women, who seemed aware of what was to be done, placed the supper on the table.

Every thing was done with the greatest order and regularity. None of the men seated themselves till the females were all placed, and then only a few of the oldest. The gentlemen of the family and their inmates carved, and divided to the best of their ability.

Morris and Henly were for some time at a loss, but soon fell into the humour of the thing, and none were more active than the *twa Sassenach*.

After supper, Mr. Fraser, in a glass of punch, drank the health of all his guests

In the course of the evening it had been whispered about that in all probability this would be the last kirk Elizabeth would be at (at least for a while). This news was received by the honest creatures with a mixture of joy and grief.

After the minister's toast had been drank, one of the oldest and most respectable of the visitors took a glass, and filling it, turned to the minister, and said something in his native language, which seemed to affect all present who understood him.

Elizabeth was much moved, and turned to a very decent-looking woman whom she sat by, and putting her arms round her neck, sobbed audibly.

Morris and Henly were aware that they were the subjects of the speech, from the word *Sassenach* being so often introduced, especially the latter, as all eyes were more than once turned on him.

At last, Archibald Fraser told him

the old man (who was the husband of Elizabeth's nurse) was lamenting that his *bairn* was going to leave the country, at the same time imploring blessings on them both.

As soon as he finished his speech, he turned to Henly, and holding out his hand, said—"Oich! Oich! wi' y're lieve dey say, y're honour be gaun to tak my nain bonny cholt awa wi' you to ta Sassenach kintra. Waes me! dat she sud lea' ta bonny Glenerrach. But, oh! oh! y're honour, me hope dat y'el be guid to my sonsy bairn. Gif ye binna, ye dinna deserve her. Ye get her gude, keep her sae; but ta folk say dat Lun-nun be a wild place. My blessing be wi' you and my bonny lassie!"

Henly shook the old man heartily by the hand, and begged of Archibald to say for him how much he felt gratified by the old man's affection for Elizabeth,—a proof of her worth. "Tell him," added he, "and the company in general, that I shall long remember

Glenerrach ;—that perhaps I may in future be at more splendid balls, but that in the midst of the *most* splendid, the *kirn* of Glenerrach shall ever be remembered by me with delight.”

This speech was put into language more easily comprehended by the generality of the party, by Archibald, and received with delight by all the company.

Henly's health and Elizabeth's was once more drank, after which the minister, with the female part of his family, and Archy, retired, and the rest of the party prepared for a renewal of their amusement.

They kept it up till about six o'clock, when they quietly dispersed, and returned to their respective homes.

Some of the gentlemen guests of the manse were obliged to go to the house of the minister's tenant at Tamtallach, where they had comfortable accommodation ; and as it was but a mile or so

from the manse, they felt no inconvenience from the walk.

It was a day or two before the family felt restored to their usual quiet state, after the bustle; and as soon as they did so, Henly began to arrange matters for the marriage.

It was finally settled that the two gentlemen should remain where they were till the very last, and then take shipping at Inverness instead of Edinburgh, where they had no particular business.

As soon as this plan was finally arranged, their servants were ordered to join them at Inverness.

It was also fixed that Allan Cameron, whose leave was now almost out, should proceed to London along with them.

CHAPTER V.

IN a former part of this tale it was mentioned that the second son of Mr. Fraser had chosen the sea for his profession. Although we have not had occasion since that to mention him more particularly, it was because there was nothing uncommon in his situation. He wrote regularly when he was in any port, and expected in the course of the ensuing spring to be promoted, having served his time as a midshipman; and his last letters were full of hope for the future.

These were received before the gentlemen left Glenerrach, and Morris begged of Mr. Fraser, when he wrote to his son, to give him his address, and request of him to call for him on his arrival in London. "I have," added

he, "some interest with one of the Lords of the Admiralty, and I shall be most happy to use it in favour of your son."

Mr. Fraser thanked him, and told him he would certainly take advantage of his kindness. He added that it would be a great comfort to him and his wife if Hector could obtain leave to come and see them before his appointment to another ship, after his promotion (should he be fortunate enough to be promoted.)

"Oh," said Henly, "we shall easily manage that; he can return with us."

Elizabeth blushed at this sally of Henly's, as it alluded to their marriage, which it was now settled was to take place in April.

Time, which in sorrow has leaden wings, in mirth and jollity passes rapidly.—But all this party were not happy.

Catherine could not divest herself of uneasy feelings on Allan's account,

who seemed to feel as keenly as herself the approaching separation. Once, only once, he resumed the subject of an immediate marriage; and *once, only once*, did Catherine listen to him with some hesitation; but at last reason triumphed, and she begged of Allan to say no more.

“Assure yourself,” said she, “of my unalterable affection; and should the field of honour become your bed of death, no other shall succeed you in my regard; indeed, should that be the case, I think I could not long survive you. Be careful, therefore, of yourself; do not rashly run into danger. Think of the many whose happiness (I might almost say existence) depends on your welfare. Have ever before your eyes, your parents, sisters, friends, and above all your Catherine; and let the idea of what they would suffer, if you should fall, excite you to guard yourself from unnecessary danger.”

This was almost the last private con-

versation they had, previous to the departure of the three gentlemen, which took place in about a fortnight after the ball.

It is quite impossible to paint the parting of Catherine and Allan. Her strength of mind enabled her to bear up as long as he was present, that she might support him; but he had no sooner left her, than her senses forsook her.

Elizabeth, who keenly felt the pang of her temporary absence from Henly, no sooner saw the sister, she with so much reason doated on, than she was roused from her own sorrow to assist in recovering her. They soon succeeded, and they led her to her own room, where she requested they might leave her for some time alone.

Archibald and Alexander had gone with them to Inverness. Henly, of course, had promised to write often.

On the return of the two young gentlemen from Inverness, they were char-

ged with large packets to the young ladies, filled, no doubt, with the most ardent professions of regard ; and from Allan a request to Catherine, that she would write to him regularly, always under cover to the agent of the regiment. “ But,” added he, “ be not surprised, should you not get regular replies,—we may be often so situated, that to write will be impossible. But rest satisfied, that the army returns will always mention the names of officers killed and wounded ; so that when you hear nothing of me, you may rely on my safety.”

As soon as the two young ladies had in some degree recovered their spirits, they commenced active preparations for Elizabeth’s change of condition.

The industrious Scottish matron is never without webs of linen uncut by her. Mrs. Fraser was too good a housewife not to be amply stored ; two or three pieces of which were immediately sacrificed to her *dear lassie*.

It would not have been an easy matter there to have had them made up, had it not been an invariable custom in the Highlands, for the neighbouring families to assist each other in any emergency; so that all this winter they were seldom without one or two young friends, who were happy to be so employed.

In the evenings (and often indeed in the middle of the day in wet weather), Alexander read aloud to them several new publications which had been sent from London by Henly and the grateful Morris. Even the good old couple were fascinated with the kind of reading they now listened to, as the gentlemen took care none but the most approved should be sent. One or two of Allan's sisters were occasionally the chief assistants, and these publications served to beguile their thoughts of anxiety for their dear brother.

House-linen was not forgotten. "I am determined," said the fond mother,

“ to shew the English, that the Scottish housewife does not get a name for industry without deserving it.” A large assortment was therefore set aside for Elizabeth.

Winter passed imperceptibly away; and early in the spring it was settled that the two sisters should go to Inverness to procure those things which could not be made at home. For this purpose Elizabeth's purse was amply filled by her father, who was determined to fit out his daughter in a way suitable to the station in which she was to move.

He was the better enabled to do this, from Henly having declared that he would not take a sixpence with her; and requested that what was meant for her should be added to Catherine's fortune.

About the middle of March, the young ladies returned to Glenerrach, to make the final arrangements for the arrival of the English party, which

took place early in April, with the addition of Henly's sister, now Mrs. Morris.

They had made this their marriage-journey; and as soon as the other marriage was to take place, both couples were to return together. They proposed being some time in Edinburgh; and proceeding from thence to the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and so on to London, where houses were to be taken for both families in the vicinity of each other.

A sister of Mr. Morris was to superintend the furnishing of both, so that all would be ready for their reception on their arrival. The houses were in Portman-Square.

Henly had been as good as his word, for he had brought Hector Fraser back with him, who had passed his examination with honour to himself, and was confirmed a lieutenant, and in hopes of being soon appointed to a ship; indeed it was intimated to him that he would be expected back in three months.

The joy of the old couple was extreme at seeing this darling son, from whom they had been separated for years. He was much grown since he had left home, and his naturally fair complexion was browned by hot climates; but his heart was still the same,—warm and affectionate to his family, and benevolent to those around him. In short, every amiable characteristic of a British sailor was centered in the breast of Hector Fraser.

Catherine heard as often as circumstances admitted from Allan Cameron.

Every one was delighted with Mrs. Morris, who seemed a most amiable young woman. She was in her twentieth year; but from her sedate manner you would suppose she was ten years more.

Catherine rejoiced to see that her sister seemed pleased with her society, as she had great hopes that her sedate turn of mind would induce Elizabeth to be a more domestic character than

she feared she would incline herself to be from her great vivacity, when she was introduced into the gay world—a scene which would be so new to her, and in which she would require so much discretion, united as she was to so lively a character as Henly.

The mornings were devoted generally to shewing the adjoining scenery to Mrs. Morris; indeed, from the difference of the season of the year, it seemed equally new to her husband and brother.

Elizabeth, previous to the arrival of her friends, had paid her leave-taking visits to the families of her acquaintance at the greatest distance, but her visit to the Camerons she put off till a few days before her marriage, at which some of the younger branches of the family were to be present.

Henly did not forget his promise to the old couple in the mountains, of taking Elizabeth to see them before she should leave Glenerrach. They walked

over to see them one day. The good old souls were delightēd, and when she was bidding them goodbye, they spoke so feelingly that she could not refrain from tears. They spoke in their native language, consequently Henly could not understand, but he guessed it from the agitation of Elizabeth. He gave the old man a guinea, and desired Elizabeth to tell them that he intended to leave orders with Archibald to pay them three pounds every year for their joint lives.

She told the old man what Henly had said. He almost screamed with joyful surprise. " Oich ! oich ! *tree pund !* Fat will me du wi' dat muckle sillar ? Me nor ta auld bhein no canna spen' it. Wi y're leave, me 'ill juist lie't wi' his honour for a tocher to ta puir lassie my oe, for, waes me, she no hae ony ane to tak her when me be deed ; and hirsell' wad be thought muckle mair o' gin her had ta siller. *Tree pund !* Ohone ! no a shepherd in ta glen

but wad be glad ta tak her wi' sae muckle sillar."

Henly bid Elizabeth to tell him that he was not to keep it for a tocher for his oe, but that it should be laid out every winter in warm clothing and other comforts for himself and his wife.

When this was explained to the old man, he took off his bonnet with great reverence, and said to his benefactor—
"Juist as y're honour likes; me no say anither word."

Elizabeth and Henly now bid them farewell once more, and returned to the manse.

He told Archibald the engagement he had come under, and gave him twenty pounds for the purpose, with directions to draw on him for more when that was expended.

Immediately after his last arrival at Glenerrach, Henly had laid a state of his fortune before the minister, by which means that gentleman saw that his intended son-in-law had a clear

estate of five thousand pounds a-year, besides some lying money, over and above what he was to give Morris as his sister's fortune. He had got all the settlements made out in London ready for signature, by which he settled one thousand pounds a-year of jointure on Elizabeth, which, if she survived him, was to go at her death to the younger children, in addition to ten thousand pounds of money secured to them.

Mr. Fraser and Archibald both objected to so large a jointure; but Henly was firm. He said he could not bear that his wife, if she survived him, should not have it in her power to live as comfortably as in his lifetime, without being dependent on her son, or what was worse, on the next male-heir, as the estate was strictly entailed.

Mr. Morris had told Mr. Fraser that he thought if Alexander went to London with them, he had interest, if he wished it, to get him out to India as a writer. The old couple assented,

though they knew that they should keenly feel the loss of both their children, especially as, in all probability, they never would see Alexander more; but, like true Christians, they sacrificed their own feelings to the good of their son.

The day at length arrived which was to separate Elizabeth from her beloved parents. Although it was the one also which was to unite her to the man of her choice, and that her prospects were brilliant, she could not divest herself of feeling the separation keenly.

A neighbouring clergyman performed the ceremony, after which the newly-married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Morris, and Alexander Fraser, set off in two carriages for Inverness, proposing to stop at Fort-Augustus that night.

Archibald Fraser, and another young man who had been at the marriage, were to escort them a few miles, in order to leave the worthy couple and Catherine more at liberty to indulge

their feelings. For the same purpose the Misses Cameron left the manse for home immediately after they had taken an affectionate leave of their friend and companion the bride.

Many were the advices given by the careful parents to their children, all of which they received with the greatest reverence, and certainly with every wish to adhere to them.

About a mile from the manse they were very much surprised to see a considerable number of decent-looking men, dressed in the Highland garb, led by a piper, with streamers of pale blue ribbons hanging from his pipe, and a bunch of the same in his bonnet. Indeed most of the men had their bonnets decorated in the same manner.

Archibald instantly conjectured what the cause of this assemblage was; and on Henly asking him the meaning of it, told him that it was out of compliment to his sister, and that they

wished to escort her a few miles on the road.

Elizabeth, whose tears had not yet dried up from parting with her family, redoubled them on seeing this proof of affection.

On approaching the crowd, the carriage stopped, and she spoke to her foster-father, who was immediately after the piper. She addressed the afflicted old man in the Gaelic language, and to the rest she bid farewell in the same. They all took off their bonnets, and the leader, in the name of the whole, bestowed their blessing on her in the most energetic manner, in their native language, but said she must not be angry at their going on with her till the place where they were to bait the horses, which was a few miles further.

Archibald begged of them to change this plan, but they were obstinate, and marched off triumphantly, with their piper at their head.

Mrs. Morris's carriage followed the bride's; and she was at first a good deal startled at observing so many men in such an uncouth dress; she had never seen so many assembled in it before.

Alexander was in the carriage with her, and told them what he supposed was the cause.

“ Oh,” cried she, with energy, “ who would not be born a Highlander? I am almost tempted to wish myself one, when I see such genuine marks of affection. Morris, when would you see so gratifying a scene among the peasantry of England? Never! They will receive all the benefits you please to bestow on them; but will they participate in your feelings either of joy or grief? No, no; they would see the marriage cavalcade pass without taking any further notice, than ‘ *Wounds! these be moighty foine beeasts that squoire have got in his cooach.*’ ”

Morris could not help agreeing with

his wife ; but said, as they had the misfortune to be born in England, they, on their part, among their own peasantry, must endeavour to conciliate their affections, and treat them with the same kindness the Highland gentry did ; “ for believe me,” added he, “ Maria, that kindness will always meet with kindness in return.”

“ No, no, Herbert ; the peasantry of England are of too selfish a character for you ever to expect to meet with so pleasing a scene as that we have just witnessed.”

Alexander sighed at listening to this conversation. “ Alas !” said he to himself, “ am I leaving the warm-hearted inhabitants of Glenerrach, to mix with a selfish set of people, who will neither rejoice nor be sad with me ? Surely Mrs. Morris must be mistaken ? She herself is a proof that all the English are not unfeeling ; and I may still hope to meet with some hearts congenial with my own, to make up for those

dear friends I am forced to leave behind."

They soon arrived at the inn where the horses were to bait, and where the peasantry were to leave them.

Henly ordered some whisky for them, and gave Archy twenty pounds to distribute among the most necessitous of the parish. He had quite forgotten to give it to his father-in-law, which he had intended, but begged Archibald would take charge of it.

Morris presented him with ten pounds for the same purpose.

The piper, who was walking up and down in front of the house, saw preparations making for the departure of the *dun wasal* (gentlemen.) He gave the signal, and in a moment the whole party were in front of the house; and just as the carriages drove off, they, with one consent, took off their bonnets, waved them in the air, and gave three cheers.

It had been Archibald's intention to

have left his sister here ; but to avoid returning with the country people, he lengthened his ride. They thought the young minister was to have gone on to Fort Augustus, otherwise they would have gone as far as he did. Archy was aware of this, and determined to take a circuitous road to the manse.

The time soon arrived when Elizabeth was to bid adieu to the last of her family. She felt it keenly, but said she trusted she would see him soon in London.

The parting between the Brothers was most affecting. The chance was they never might meet again ; if they did, it would not be for many years. There was a great difference in their ages ; but the dependence that Alexander had on his brother for assistance in his education endeared them to each other. In all his little difficulties, from his earliest recollection, it was to Archy he had applied. All this recurred to Alexander's mind at the moment of

separation, and he shewed it by almost a woman's weakness.

In due time our travellers arrived at Edinburgh. That town is the boast of every true Scottish heart; and with much pride did Elizabeth hear the praises bestowed on it by her fellow-travellers. They were to remain there for some time, and took apartments at one of the principal hotels, from whence they made excursions to every place of note in the neighbourhood. It was rather early in the season to see Roslin in all its beauty, but still they went to visit it, and the celebrated glen of Hawthorndean. Holyroodhouse, the Castle, in short, every public building of any consequence in the city, and every place worth seeing in the vicinity, were visited by them.

Elizabeth had many acquaintances in town, who were happy to pay them every attention. The theatre was open; it was a new scene to Elizabeth. She had seen a play once or twice at Inver-

ness; no wonder then that the sight of the inimitable Mrs. Siddons senior was a treat to her. Indeed her feelings were so worked up at seeing her representation of *Mrs. Beverly* in the *Gamester*, that she was obliged to leave the house.

After seeing every thing of note, they set off on their original plan of visiting the Lakes; and when June was nearly over, they arrived in safety at the elegant mansion prepared for them in London.

CHAPTER VI.

WE must not forget our friends at Glenerrach, but shall now return, and see how they bore the loss of the lively Elizabeth.

Hector had remained with them, as he thought it would have been cruel to have left them so soon ; and he begged of Henly, if possible, to get him appointed to some ship that was not to sail early, as, in that event, his leave of absence could be lengthened. It was many years since he had been at home ; and, from the age of his parents, he was fearful he might never see them again ; he was therefore anxious to stay as long as possible. Besides, he was almost a stranger to his sister Catherine, she having been at school when he left home.

The more he saw of her, the more proud he felt of such a sister. He had heard of her meritorious conduct relative to Cameron, and he could not but admire her behaviour. No repining ever met the ear of her parents. In their presence she did every thing she could to cheer them, after the departure of her sister and brother; but to Hector she told what she suffered from anxiety of mind, and that every day the newspaper was expected she invariably felt a dread of bad accounts. "Henly and Elizabeth," said she to him one day, "were very urgent with me to accompany them to London; and, had my mind been at ease, nothing would have made me more happy, as I would have been so much longer with dear Sandy; but I could not bear that the first days of their happiness should be clouded by my anxiety. And what state would I have been in in London, mixing with a gay society, when, even here, I am never cheerful,

but that the image of poor Allan, wounded and bleeding, obtrudes itself on my mind, and often sends me to my own room to weep. In vain I call reason to my aid, and try to argue myself out of the idea that we are never to meet again."

Hector blamed her for giving way to such fancies. He bid her be of good comfort.—“ Never fear, dear Kate,” said he, “ I am sure you and Allan will be spliced together yet ; and that by the time I again cast anchor in old England, you will be safely moored and in harbour.”

“ Ah, Hector !” said she, “ long may you remain as free of care as you are now ! And take warning by me ; enter into no engagement,—guard your heart well—till you are in a situation to support a wife, without exposing yourself to danger.”

Hector sighed.—“ Kate,” said he, “ though I spoke in that way to rouse you, think not that I do not feel for

you. Heaven knows I do; and, from sad experience too, do I feel for poor Allan; for Kate, in strict confidence, I must tell you that your caution is too late;—my heart is irrevocably engaged, and to one of the sweetest girls you ever saw. Of her looks you will have a faint idea from this picture.”

He untied a black ribbon, which was round his neck, and gave the picture to Catherine, who was indeed surprised at seeing the representation of a girl, seemingly not more than sixteen years of age, and uncommonly fair; the expression of her eye seemed lively, and there was a sort of sportive smile about the mouth, which made Catherine ask, if she were not very cheerful?

“Never was a being more so,” said he; “nor never was infant more innocent or free of guile.”

He then told his sister that her name was Moreland,—that she was the daughter of a gentleman who had long been a purser in the navy,—she was

the eldest of five children, and, consequently, could not have much fortune. "As to birth," continued he, "we are equal; and she having been brought up in the strictest economy, I see no objection our parents could have to our immediate marriage. Many are obliged to support families on the pay of a lieutenant in the navy. I do not mean to speak of it here, till I sound the parents of Louisa. But I see no reasonable objection they can have, save our youth."

"For mercy's sake," said Catherine, "never speak of it here!—well I know our father never would give his consent; and you surely would not enter into so serious an engagement without it?"

"I believe you are right; I shall say nothing about it at present, but I feel relieved at having made my confession to you. I could not bring myself to speak of it to Archibald, he is so plaguy grave; besides, he could have

no sympathy for me, satisfied as he is that there will be no obstacles thrown in the way of his marriage with Anne Cameron; but with you I can now converse freely, and would I could but introduce you to my sweet Louisa!"

They had frequently heard from Mrs. Henly,—she wrote from every place they made any stay at; and they were now in daily expectation of hearing from her from London.

The welcome news of her safe arrival at that place at length arrived. Elizabeth's letter, as may be imagined, was full of the delight she felt at the sight of the gay metropolis.

"I fear," added she, in her letter to her sister, "that Henly will quite spoil me, he is continually heaping such magnificent presents on me. In addition to the very handsome set of pearls which he brought me to Glennerrach, he has presented me with some diamonds, which are heir-looms, and which Mrs. Mortimer (Morris's sister) got new

set when Henly went north. They are not numerous, but they are splendid.

“ Mrs. M. is a very amiable woman ; her husband is in the East Indies, and she came home for the education of her two girls, as she could not bear to entrust so precious a charge to any one else. Their education is now about being finished, and they are to accompany their mother out to India in the Christmas fleet. They are pleasing little girls, and I have no doubt will soon be splendidly settled in the East. She is a great many years older than Herbert, being of a prior marriage ; but they are much attached to each other.

“ Think not that although I have spoken as yet of nothing in this letter but gaiety and dress, that my affection for dear Glenerrach is in the least lessened, or that the dear inhabitants of the manse are not constantly before me. I see our dear mother, after the breakfast things are removed, quiet-

ly take her chair at the fire-side and commence her knitting, or take up a book ;—our revered father and dear serious brother Archy, retire to their respective apartments to study ;—and last of all, I see you, my sedate and much-loved sister, after arranging the domestic concerns in-doors, attend the domestic concerns out of doors ; and in passing, take a survey of all the poultry, and observe what casualties have happened since you last saw them. All this is before my eyes, when I am perhaps roused to attend to some insignificant morning visitor.

“ Henly is soon to let Hector know the result of his application for longer leave. Adieu, my ever dear sister, and believe me to be your’s with unalterable affection,

“ ELIZABETH HENLY.”

These lively epistles served to keep up the spirits of this worthy family, which were sometimes likely to be cast

down from their respective causes of uneasiness,—the parents from the expected departure of their dear son—that son and Catherine from the anxiety they experienced relative to the safety and happiness of those dear to them.

Archibald was the most serene of the party, as he had no cause of uneasiness, except from sympathy to his friends. But in this serenity he had no merit; his fortitude had never been called forth. Of a mild and studious character, he was much beloved by his family, and had early placed his affections on the sister of his friend Allan Cameron, and Anne Cameron was also the favourite companion of his sister Kate. Nothing put a stop to the marriage but waiting till he was appointed his father's assistant and successor.

According to the promise held out in Elizabeth's last letter, in due time Hector received one from Henly, an-

nouncing his prolonged leave of absence till September.

Catherine's spirits also were now a little relieved by kind letters from Allan. There had been an engagement, but he had escaped unhurt. He had also got one or two steps in the regiment, from some of his senior lieutenants having been promoted in others; so that at present her hopes were a little more sanguine. But she thought not of the present moment alone—she looked forward to futurity, and often reflected, that however pleasing her present prospects might be, many circumstances might occur to prevent them from being ever realised. In short, without ever appearing gloomy, Catherine Fraser was always prepared for the worst.

Alexander frequently wrote; he had been busy studying the Hindoostanee language, and had made considerable progress. Morris had obtained the writership for him, and he was to sail with

the Christmas fleet. He had also obtained permission for him to go in the same ship with Mrs. Mortimer. She was very partial to him, and had promised, that on his arrival at Madras her husband should pay him every attention,—a promise of the utmost consequence, as it is of the greatest benefit to every young man going to India, in whatever situation, to be properly introduced.

Thus far all promised well for the family of Glenerrach, and as yet Mr. Fraser had every reason to bless the storm which had driven the strangers on his hospitality——But we cannot always command events.

In the next letters which Catherine had from Alexander, he mentioned that Mr. and Mrs. Morris were busy preparing for going to Lisbon, where Mr. Morris had been unexpectedly appointed consul.

“ I regret this,” added he, “ chiefly on Elizabeth’s account, who, I grieve

to say, seems completely changed. Far, far am I from attaching any other blame to her conduct than the constant wish she has for being in company. Henly seems to regret it, though he says nothing; but his own behaviour, on her first coming to London, is very much the cause of it. He felt proud of her appearance, and urged her to go more about than perhaps she wished; but being always accompanied by Mrs. Morris, I never felt uneasy.

“ The case is now reversed; she seems unhappy at home, and when there never without a party. Henly, who though gay and volatile, had he met with a domestic wife would have become so himself, is now forced to seek for resources abroad, and I am sorry to say he has found them at the gaming-table. Keep this intelligence to yourself till you can make your own observations, as I am given to understand a joint petition has gone off from Henly and Bess, requesting permission

for you to accompany Hector up when he comes in September. Let me entreat of you not to refuse, as by that means you can watch over our sister, and I shall also once more have the happiness of embracing you," &c. &c.

This letter was a severe shock to Catherine; but she had dreaded something unpleasant from the tenor of Elizabeth's last letters, which were written with a seemingly forced cheerfulness, containing nothing but accounts of this splendid ball and that crowded rout.

At last the letter arrived craving the permission of the old couple for Catherine to pass the ensuing winter in London. They wished her to be allowed to come up with Hector.

The parents gave a reluctant consent, and they were a good deal surprised to see with what alacrity Kate accepted the invitation and commenced preparations. Her only regret was leaving the old couple alone; for although Archibald was to be at home

this winter, his studies being over at the college, it was some one to look after the domestic concerns she was at a loss for.

Anne Cameron was withheld, from motives of delicacy, from offering her services, and the same feeling kept Catherine from asking her. At length a respectable young girl, a gentlewoman born, but from misfortunes living in a state of dependence, occurred to her, and she readily accepted the invitation, and agreed to come directly to the manse to be initiated in her charge. She was well known to the family, and much esteemed by them, so that it was a most fortunate idea. The poor thing herself had every prospect of being in a happier situation than she generally was, as she was too often made to feel that no pill is so bitter to swallow as that of *dependence*.

The Misses Cameron also promised Catherine that they would often enliven the society of the family at the manse,

and above all, take her place at the kirk, which the old man insisted should not be omitted this year.

“ Although,” said he, “ so few of my own family are about me, are not all the parish my children? and for the absence of a few are the rest to be punished? Na, na,” said he, “ and we shall this year fill an additional glass to the happiness of my dear absent bairns.”

At the appointed time Catherine and Hector left the glen. Severe was the pang the old and venerable pair felt at thus, in their old age, bidding (what from the course of nature they looked on) as a last adieu to their beloved Hector. It required all the fortitude attending the true Christian character to enable them to support it.

Archibald would not go to Inverness with the travellers, and Anne Cameron and one of her sisters came to pass the first days of their solitude with their friends at Glenerrach.

The plan of our story compels us to leave the family of Glenerrach in its tranquil state, and confine ourselves for a time to Portman Square, where Catherine and Hector arrived without any accident.

Catherine, in the joyful meeting with her sister, did not observe the change that the gay life Elizabeth had been leading (though but for a few months) had made on her appearance; although she looked paler, she attributed it to her situation, which was now very evident, and she testified so much joy at seeing her, and made such affectionate inquiries after every individual at Glenerrach, that she was in great hopes Sandy had been causelessly alarmed, and that Elizabeth was as domestic as she wished her to be; but she hoped to be able to judge better next day.

Henly, apparently, was not in the least changed; he seemed delighted to see Catherine once more, and the quartetto passed a most delightful evening.

Catherine asked for Alexander, and was told he was well; but that, not expecting her quite so soon, he had engaged himself that evening at a party at Mrs. Mortimer's.

About eleven o'clock, Elizabeth asked Catherine, if she felt inclined to retire? She gladly accepted the offer, as she felt a good deal fatigued.

Henly had left them about an hour before.

Mrs. Henly said that she would not detain her that night, to put a thousand questions she had yet to ask and get answered about dear Glenerrach; "especially," added she, "as I have to fulfil an engagement of six weeks standing."

"An engagement at this time of night, Bess!" said Catherine; "you are certainly imposing on my credulity."

"Positively not," said Elizabeth, "and you will soon be initiated into the customs of the gay world."

"Never, I trust!" said Catherine,

gravely. "Oh, Elizabeth! what would the dear couple at Glenerrach say, did they know this?"

"Goodnight, my dear grave sister," said Mrs. Henly, kissing her; "on this subject we shall say no more to-night."

CHAPTER VII.

SHORT as the above conversation had been, it banished sleep for a while from Catherine, notwithstanding her fatigue; at last she sunk into a quiet slumber.

Long practice made her waken at her usual hour, and she got up and amused herself, till she thought it near breakfast time, in arranging her clothes in the drawers and wardrobe which were in her room.

About ten, as no one came near her, she rung the bell. The chambermaid answered the summons, and Catherine asked her at what hour breakfast would be ready?

The girl told her she could get hers as soon as she pleased, as the breakfast parlour was done out; but that her

master never left his room till one or two, and that her mistress always breakfasted in her dressing-room.

Catherine had prudence enough to testify no surprise at this, and desired the girl to order breakfast, and to send a servant to inform Mr. Fraser that she waited for him.

Hector had an apartment in his brother-in-law's, and it was he she meant; but on going down stairs she was embraced by Alexander, who having heard (by accident) the evening before, of her arrival, had lost no time in coming to see her.

Many were the affectionate questions Alexander asked about his dear parents during the repast; and it was as much as Catherine and Hector (who soon joined them) could do to answer them.

She could not help feeling delight on the improvement a few months had made on Alexander. He was always good-looking, and the society he had lately been mixing in for some time

past being of the first order, he had acquired an elegance of manner truly astonishing. His sister could not but rejoice that he did not seem so wedded to the gay world as Elizabeth was.

Hector being present, nothing of this subject was hinted; only Catherine said, "By the bye, Alexander, how does it happen that you do not sleep here? I thought, at your first coming, you had done so."

"I did," said Alexander, with some hesitation, "but—but I—I thought I would be more at ease in lodgings of my own; and it is no great expense, as I merely sleep and breakfast there. I always dine here, when not otherways engaged."

Catherine seeing some mystery, said no more till they should be by themselves, which was soon the case; as immediately after breakfast, Hector went to shew himself at the Admiralty. But before they had time to enter fully on the subject, Catherine was sum-

moned to her sister, who was at breakfast in her own dressing-room.

“ I am happy,” said Elizabeth, “ that you did not wait for me ; I forgot to tell you last night ; but, on coming home, I ordered the housekeeper to have your breakfast ready when you liked, as I knew you were an early riser, and I never get up till very late.”

Catherine, during this speech, was looking with an eye of anxiety at her sister. Now the change in her appearance was indeed visible. She was dressed in an elegant morning dress, and every thing bespoke her the woman of fashion ; but her cheeks were pale, and her eyes, from late sitting, had lost much of their brilliancy.

“ Where is Henly ?” said Catherine.

“ Oh,” said Elizabeth, “ he is not yet out of bed, and will not be for an hour or two. I believe it was past six this morning before he came home from Brooks’s. But I can scarce tell, as I was very sleepy, it being near four before I was in bed myself.”

“ I am sorry, Bess,” said Catherine, “ to see you so ignorant of your husband’s motions ; and seemingly so indifferent as to how he passes his time. A few months ago I should not have thought of hearing you speak in this way.”

“ Oh,” said Elizabeth, “ he is not the same Henly he was then, or even what he was three months after our marriage. Had he continued the same, I never would have changed my sentiments ; but he is no longer the obsequious lover, or adoring husband.”

“ Take care, Elizabeth ; you are on slippery ground, and touching on a subject I must put a stop to, namely, complaining of your husband, when, perhaps, if you were to look into yourself, you might find the change originated there.”

“ I do not see how that can be, Kate,” said Mrs. Henly. “ When I first came to London, he was pleased to see me taken notice of, and insisted

on my going much about; and now, because I have become fond of it, he wishes to restrain me, and even finds fault with some of the friends I have got acquainted with, because, forsooth, Mrs. Mortimer does not think proper to visit them!"

"Hush, Bess!" said Catherine; "remember you are speaking disrespectfully of the person you vowed to honour; but, be assured, I will not listen to you."

"I do it," said Elizabeth, "that you may be prepared for the frequent disputes it is likely you may hear, and as I know he will wish to gain you to his side."

"Then, be assured," said Catherine, "when he does, I shall give him the same answer I now give you, that I will take no side."

Mrs. Henly now accompanied her sister to the drawing-room, where they soon after were joined by the two brothers, and a most interesting conversa-

tion took place about their revered parents.

Elizabeth seemed to have forsaken entirely the fine lady, and to be transported back to Glenerrach. She was deeply affected at the manner Flora had behaved on hearing of her marriage. She gave a sort of shudder, and said she hoped her (Flora's) fears might not be prophetic; but she soon recovered herself, and behaved with her wonted ease of manner.

Flora was a poor maniac, niece to Elizabeth's nurse, who wandered about the country; but being absent at the time of Elizabeth's marriage, shewed great grief at her missing her, and said she hoped they might not repent Miss Lizzy's marrying a Sassenach. Pretending to foretel things, she impressed the lower orders with an idea of misfortunes being to follow this marriage.

Morning visitors now began to pour in. Amongst the first was Mrs. Mortimer, whom Elizabeth received with

more ceremony than Catherine thought was right from her former kindness, and the sort of family connection.

Catherine had been prepared by Elizabeth herself to esteem her, and shewed that by the frankness with which she received Mrs. Mortimer's offers of friendship. She sat chatting a good while, and ere she left them, a Mrs. Harrington was announced. On her appearance, Elizabeth received her with the greatest cordiality, and introduced her to her sister as her very particular friend.

The reception Catherine gave her was cool but polite. She addressed the greatest part of her conversation to Mrs. Mortimer. The other two ladies kept up a sort of whispering chit-chat.

Catherine could not help starting when she heard Mrs. Harrington ask Mrs. Henly, in a sort of whisper, how she had come off the night before?

Elizabeth looked confused, as if she were afraid the question had been over-

heard, and said something about one hundred pounds. Whether she said she had lost or won that sum, Catherine could not make out, but she almost wished it might have been the first, as she had hopes it would have disgusted her with cards.

Mrs. Mortimer seemed aware of the topic of conversation also, and looked at Mrs. Henly with an eye of pity. She soon after rose to take leave, after renewing her invitation to Catherine of seeing her frequently, which she promised. She shook hands very kindly with Elizabeth, and bowed slightly to Mrs. Harrington in passing her.

That lady soon took leave also. She likewise kindly invited Catherine to accompany Mrs. Henly to her parties. The invitation was more warmly given than received, as Catherine determined against her acquaintance.

The sisters were now *tête a tête*, and Catherine was not sorry that she had so early an opportunity of telling her

sister her opinion of her two late visitors, by Elizabeth's asking her, if she did not think Mrs. Harrington a very charming woman?

"Mrs. Harrington a very charming woman! I must know a little more of her," said Catherine, "before I can give her the epithet 'charming;' but she certainly has very pleasing and insinuating manners. But I am much delighted with Mrs. Mortimer."

"You did not use, Kate," replied her sister, "to be so easily caught."

"You forget, my dear Bess," said Catherine, "that it is only personally Mrs. Mortimer and I are strangers till to-day; and that my regard for her is founded on the account you gave me of her yourself."

"It is true," said Elizabeth, "on my first coming to London, she was very kind and attentive to me; but I don't know how it is, she has not been so much so of late."

"Shall I tell you the reason, my

dear sister?" said Catherine. "She sees you now more taken up with gayer companions, and mixing with people whose acquaintance she has no wish to cultivate."

"They may not be the less amiable for that," said Elizabeth.

"I should be very far from thinking they were," said Catherine; "but depend on it, as soon as I have formed my own opinion, I shall give it to you candidly."

Their conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Henly. He kindly wished Catherine good-morning, and asked his wife, how she and her sister intended passing the forenoon?

"We have just parted," said she, "from the last of our morning visitors; and I was on the point of asking Kate whether she had any objections to a drive in Hyde Park, when you came in."

"Oh," said Catherine, "you know yet I can have no choice; you may

drive me where you like, only do not *drive* me to be as great a gad-about as yourself."

She said this half-laughing, but she regretted having said it at all, when she heard Henly heave a most profound sigh. On looking at him, she almost started at the expression of his countenance; it seemed almost a labour for him to speak.

The carriage was now announced, and the sisters set out on their ride, and Henly sallied forth in quest of some of his gay companions. He had since his marriage given up all idea of following his profession as a lawyer.

The dinner hour assembled the whole party again; and Henly asked his wife if this was not the evening of Mrs. Colonel Stanhope's rout? and if she had prevailed on her sister to accompany them?

"I have been doing what I could," said Mrs. Henly, "but cannot succeed."

“ No, no,” said Catherine, “ I have a greater regard for you than to run the risk of your losing your celebrity in the world of fashion, which you certainly would do by introducing such a Goth as myself, till I am a little broken in. But, joking apart, this evening I devote to our dear fireside at Glenerach ; and that I may be quite uninterrupted, I beg you may take Hector and Sandy with you.”

“ I go, at all events, an invited guest,” said Sandy.

“ And I,” said Hector, “ will be happy to see one London kick-up, as I leave this the day after to-morrow, being ordered to join one of the ships belonging to Lord Keith’s fleet. I too,” added he, “ Kate, must this night write to the good old couple to implore their prayers.”

The intelligence of his so immediate departure made them all a little grave for a while ; but he was the first to break silence, and to bid his sisters cheer up,

and to tell Mrs. Henly to go and get herself rigged out.

Between nine and ten the party were ready to set off; and certainly a more interesting looking creature than Elizabeth was this night could scarcely be seen.

As soon as they were gone, Catherine seated herself at her writing-table; and she was so much taken up in imparting her feelings to her dear parents, that it struck eleven before she was aware. Soon after that she was startled with a ringing at the hall door. She was hurrying away her papers, when her brother Alexander came into the room, and told her he had slipped from the party, on purpose to have an uninterrupted chat with her; "and," added he, "there is no danger of our being broken in on for two hours at least."

Catherine knew well Sandy had something of consequence to impart, and was as glad of this opportunity as he could be.

He now told her, that the true reason he had for leaving Portman Square was the difficulty he felt how to act, both Henly and Elizabeth referring to his opinion in all their differences. And what could he say, when in general both were wrong? “Indeed, Kate, I fear our poor sister, or at least her friends, will rue the day she ever left Glenerrach. Had they,” added he, “met with partners of opposite characters to themselves, they would be very different now. But both young, gay, and fond of company, fatal consequences must arise.”

Catherine shuddered.

Her brother observed it, and said—“Of Elizabeth’s principles I have not the least doubt; and I am convinced an idea contrary to the most rigid virtue has never entered her head. But who can answer for the bad effects of example? And what I feel the most uneasiness about, is the fondness she has lately shewn for cards. I left her now

at the card-table, flushed with success, playing against Mrs. Harrington and Colonel Stanhope at half-guinea whist, besides betting a guinea on the odd card."

Catherine now told her brother of the conversation she had partly overheard that day, and asked what his opinion of Mrs. Harrington was?

"Certainly not a good one," said Sandy; "yet she is tolerated in a certain degree in fashionable circles, as she has as yet never been proved to have forfeited her place in society. But I must say it is only those who are not very fastidious who tolerate her at all, and then they generally have some point to carry. What Stanhope's reason is for paying her such marked attention I cannot fathom, but they seem to be in some plot. I am not singular in making this observation, as you will perceive from a conversation I overheard the other night at a party, be-

tween two gentlemen to whom I was a stranger :—

‘ Well, Tom,’ said one of them, ‘ how did you get off at Brookes’s the other night ?’

‘ Very well,’ said the person so addressed ; ‘ I won about two thousand pounds.’

‘ Did you indeed ?’ said the other. ‘ But what has come to Stanhope ? he has quite given up the gaming-table. I suppose he is going to *reform*,’ with a strong emphasis on the last word.

‘ I do not agree with you,’ said Tom ; ‘ but he and Mrs. Harrington seem to have some object in view, for he never pays her such attention without some motive.’

“ The parties now moved off,” continued Sandy ; “ but I had heard enough to make me anxious to hear a little more of the Colonel’s character. I have therefore requested my most intimate friend (who is at present out of town), but who has good opportunities of ac-

quiring information on that point to communicate the result of his inquiries. I long much to introduce you to Henry Gordon."

Catherine now asked her brother if he had any reason to suppose that Henly had lately met with any serious loss at the gaming-table?

"Yes, by the bye," said Alexander, "those gentlemen said something about Henly having lately lost five thousand pounds in one night."

"Oh," said Catherine, "what is to be done?"

"Nothing," said Alexander, "on the ground of my information; but as soon as you have made your own observations, which you will soon have an opportunity of doing, it will be then your duty to point out to Bess the dangerous course she is running on in."

The reader will no doubt infer from what has been said, that Elizabeth's character had undergone a great change; but it had not. But what lively young

woman of eighteen, brought up in a retired situation, and all at once introduced to the gay society of London, could have stood the trial she had done? Had Mrs. Morris remained a little longer with her, her character in all probability would have acquired firmness from her sister-in-law's example. But on her leaving town, she unfortunately selected for her friend Mrs. Harrington, whose character will soon be more completely laid open.

It was some time before Elizabeth could be prevailed on to play. At last Mrs. Harrington succeeded in inducing her to join. She played, and her party won again and again, with the same good fortune, till, flushed with success, she began to bet; and at the time her sister arrived in London, she had two hundred pounds in her card purse, and she was getting daily more fascinated by this dangerous amusement. Her husband saw what was going on, and trembled; but, as has been before seen,

his time and attention were taken up in the same way, with this difference, he was always unfortunate. But this infatuated couple were devoted victims to a deep-laid plot, which in time shall be laid before the reader.

CHAPTER VIII.

GEORGE HENLY, as may have been seen from the precipitancy with which he urged his immediate marriage with Elizabeth Fraser, was a young man of the most impetuous disposition but honourable principles, and had strict ideas of female virtue. He had not long left the university, where he had been studying for the bar; and the first winter he resided in London was as a married man, not more than twenty-two years of age.

Happy in the affections of Elizabeth, proud of her beauty and the admiration she met with, he urged her to go more into the gay world than she perhaps liked at first; but once liking it, her ardent mind was carried by the stream, and she soon found scarce any

any pleasure save in a party either at home or abroad.

Henly, when he found this, remonstrated, fearful for her health; but it was too late—by his over indulgence at first he lost all authority over her, and finding argument vain, he gave it up.

He had, as before mentioned, now given up all idea of pursuing his profession, his fortune being sufficient without it—Fatal resolution! as by this means he had much time on his hands, which unfortunately he passed at the gaming-table, where he was likely soon to become a prey to the artful and designing.

Catherine had early told her sister and Henly, that she would only partake of the amusements of London *soberly*, and never could she be persuaded to go to more than one party of an evening—a mode of conduct for which she was laughed at for a time, but her firmness was not to be shaken. She derived great pleasure from the society

of Mrs. Mortimer. She also corresponded with Mrs. Morris, to whom, and to her own family, she from time to time gave an account of what she thought of London, and the people she met with. But as a delineation of men and manners is not the intention of this work, we shall not insert her letters. It is a sufficient proof what her opinion was, that she invariably looked forward with anxiety to the time of her intended return to Glenerrach.

She heard frequently from Hector, now with his ship at Plymouth, where he was detained longer than he expected,—an event he could not regret, as it kept him near his Louisa. She also had frequent letters from the manse. The last from thence was from Archibald, who told her that the period of his happiness was at last fixed, as their respective parents had agreed that the following spring would see him and his Anne united.

“ But,” added he, “ my dear Kate,

as neither Anne nor I should conceive our felicity complete, unless you witnessed our union, we have determined to delay the ceremony till March, by which time I trust Elizabeth's health will be sufficiently restored to permit you to leave her. We shall meet you at Inverness, where Anne is to go for a few weeks, and I shall join her there, and conduct you both back. Meantime the house on our father's farm is to be put into a state of repair for us, where we will go at Whitsunday, till which period our time will be divided between the houses of our respective parents."

This letter was a real comfort to Catherine, and she required something to console her under the disquietude she felt at the infatuation of her misled sister.

Of Henly she saw very little any day after dinner, and then she grieved to see him so dejected; indeed he was even petulant to his wife, but never so to herself. She also inwardly lament-

ed the manner her sister behaved on these occasions, as, in place of keeping in mind the saying of the wise man, "That a soft answer turneth away wrath," she, on his finding fault with her for going so much abroad, and hinting that he knew how she was employed, retorted and said he had better look at home ere he found fault with her.

Catherine was often appealed to by each party in the absence of the other; but she invariably refused to give any opinion.

Certainly as the time of Mrs. Henly's confinement approached, she did keep more at home, but it was not to enjoy domestic comforts, but to fill her rooms with party after party; and with unfeigned regret did Catherine see the avidity with which her sister flew to the card-table.

Alexander had, according to his promise, introduced his friend Henry Gordon to Catherine, and, as he expected,

saw them mutually pleased with each other.

About a month before the time fixed for the departure of Mrs. Mortimer, she received the heart-rending intelligence of her husband's death. She almost sunk under the news; but when she looked on her two blooming girls, she said she would *try* to live for *their* sake, who had now no other parent.

The soothing kindness that Catherine treated her with on this melancholy event was highly gratifying, and amply (in Mrs. Mortimer's opinion) repaid any little kindness she had shewn her.

Although this distressing occurrence prevented Mrs. Mortimer and her daughters going out at the time appointed, there was no detaining Alexander; consequently he prepared to sail at the period proposed. Mrs. Mortimer gave him many letters to her friends in Madras, strongly recommending him

to their notice ; she also gave him authority to arrange all her business in the East.

About the end of January Mrs. Henly presented her husband with a daughter. During her illness all the little failings of Elizabeth were forgotten by Henly in his fears for her safety, and when Catherine flew to him with the welcome news, he clasped her in his arms in an ecstasy of joy, exclaiming,—“ Ten thousand thanks, my dearest Kate!—But when may I see my wife and babe ?”

She told him she would come for him as soon as he could be admitted without any danger to the former.

She accordingly returned in a short time, and introduced him to the bedside of his wife, whom he embraced most tenderly, repeatedly begging of her to take care of herself. He then turned to Catherine, and took the infant from her arms, whom he almost smothered with his caresses.

Elizabeth had an excellent recovery, and Catherine was in great hopes that the feelings of a mother would make a great change in her sister's mind ; but not being permitted by the medical man who attended her to perform all a mother's duty, she was the sooner able to go about, and till that period, as soon as she was able to receive visitors in her dressing-room, she had select parties, where Catherine, with regret, saw the card-table resorted to with as much avidity as ever. For a few days Henly kept more at home, but he also soon returned to his old habits and associates.

Catherine by this saw, that where a love of gaming takes a deep root in the mind, every better feeling is swallowed up in it.

CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT six weeks after the birth of the little Georgina Elizabeth, Catherine commenced her preparations for returning home. A gentleman from Inverness, with whom she was acquainted, being to return to that place by sea, she was happy to take advantage of his protection.

Alexander, previous to his sailing, had been enabled to gain a good deal of information relative both to Mrs. Harrington and Colonel Stanhope, in which he had been ably assisted by his friend Henry Gordon. It was to this effect:—Mrs. Harrington was the widow of a colonel of that name, who had married her from a boarding-school, by the advice of his friends, on account of her money. She was by no

means plain in her person, nor was she a beauty, but she had most elegant and insinuating manners. He was gay and dissipated; and she being equally fond of company, they soon spent her fortune, except about five hundred pounds a-year (her jointure). Mr. Harrington being void of principle, no sooner saw that he was unable to keep pace with his former companions, than he put a period to his existence. For a short time decency compelled his widow to abstain from visiting public places; but no sooner was her year of widowhood expired, than she once more appeared in the world of fashion. But great was the difference she found between the adulation paid to the rich Mrs. Harrington and her with a limited income. To secure herself more attention from that world which was her idol, she gave more expensive entertainments than her income would afford. The consequence is obvious,—her allowance was generally spent be-

fore it became due, and she was often at the greatest loss. At last, some of her friends suggested the idea to her of setting up a faro bank, which they assisted her liberally in accomplishing.

The woman who could adopt such a measure rather than live in respectable retirement, could not have been blessed with much delicacy of mind, nor be very fastidious about the company who resorted to her house. Many of them, therefore, were rather of doubtful reputation, and stood much in the same predicament as Mrs. Harrington herself, viz. that never having been guilty of any flagrant breach of propriety, their company was tolerated even among the respectable part of society, who found their parties always agreeable. No wonder then that Elizabeth was fascinated with such a woman, and persisted in going to her house, even after her husband had objected to it, when he heard and even saw what high play was going on.

Of Colonel Stanhope all the information Sandy had been able to get was, that with all the appearance of worth and honour, he was a complete libertine. Handsome and insinuating, he had succeeded in gaining the affections of an amiable young woman of fortune, who continued much attached to him, notwithstanding she was no stranger to his infidelities; and though she had long been an object of indifference to him, he was too much a slave to appearance not to treat her always with respect. Having early been accustomed to associate with the worst of the sex, he had a bad opinion of the whole, and had often declared that he had never failed in gaining the affections of every woman he set his heart on.

His wife was a most amiable woman, and much occupied with the education of her daughters, of whom she had two. She had one son, who attended a neighbouring school. Al-

though of a very domestic turn naturally, she determined that she would endeavour to make home agreeable to her husband, so that he might not make want of society a plea for dissipation; she therefore kept a good deal of company of the first respectability. She had masters for her daughters. She was no advocate for boarding-schools; and having been more than once obliged to part with her governess on her husband's account, this was the plan she was obliged to have recourse to, and she was rewarded by the improvement her girls made. She was pleased with Mrs. Henly from her first introduction, and admired that *naïveté* of manner which she possessed. But on Mrs. Henly associating so much with Mrs. Harrington, although she pitied her infatuation, she could not take the liberty of advising; only to Mrs. Mortimer could she mention her regret.

It is not to be wondered that Catherine, after hearing even a part of the fore-

going account (for only a part of it she could hear), felt distressed at leaving her sister. But she was aware that she could not sway her; and much as she loved her, she had no idea of entirely sacrificing her own peace of mind by remaining to witness such scenes as she now did. Besides, she was becoming uneasy about Allan Cameron. He had been in winter-quarters, but a new campaign was to be commenced; and she sighed to be with friends who would sympathise with her in her feelings.

Alexander had told Gordon, ere he introduced them to each other, how Catherine was situated; but he needed not this precaution, for poor Henry's affections were engaged, though his case, he feared, was hopeless.

In her last interview, she begged of him to watch over Elizabeth, and, if possible, shield her from danger. "For well am I aware," added she, "that this kind of life must come to something unpleasant at last."

“ Be assured, Miss Fraser, that no brother ever watched over the happiness of a beloved sister with more care than I shall do over Mrs. Henly’s,” said the kind-hearted Henry.

They now settled a correspondence, in which he was to inform her of every thing.

The parting between the sisters no pen can describe. Elizabeth, with all the keen feelings she had ever shewn, seemed to lose recollection of every thing save the passing scene. Twice she was torn from the arms of her sister, and twice she sprung back to them, exclaiming—“ Farewell! Farewell, dearest Kate! When you tell of my follies at Glenerrach, Oh do it with gentleness.”

At last her feelings so much overcame her, that she fainted, and in that state Catherine was forced to leave her, as Henry Gordon hurried her to the carriage which was at the door to convey her to the wharf.

Henly, who had been much moved at the foregoing scene, remained to assist in the recovery of his wife.

We must now accompany Catherine, who scarce spoke a word to her companion during their drive, and who, after seeing her in charge of her fellow-traveller, took a most affectionate leave of her.

With what astonishment will it be read by some (who will perhaps honour this with a perusal), that after Catherine's mind had been in some degree restored to its usual tone, she felt as a prisoner relieved from confinement, the farther she removed from London! Will the young and the gay conceive it possible that a girl, not yet twenty-one years of age, should rejoice at leaving that place, so much desired by the light-hearted youthful mind, and look forward with delight to the moment which would bring her to the quiet retreat of Glenerrach? Strange as it may seem, such was the case; but the

reflecting reader will not be surprised at that, when it is remembered that in that retreat she was to be restored to the embraces of her beloved and revered parents, and to the society of affectionate friends.

Favourable winds soon wafted the vessel to its harbour; and at Inverness, according to appointment, she found Anne Cameron ready, and waiting for her to set off for home, Archibald having managed so well that he had arrived the night before.

No fatigue did Catherine feel, and no consideration would detain her another hour from her beloved home. Next day they accordingly set out, and in due time was Catherine once more embraced by her parents.

It is only by comparison we value the blessings we enjoy. How did Catherine rejoice to find herself once more the domestic housewife, minutely looking after her household cares,—a task she eagerly recommenced. With what

delight did she make preparations for the marriage of her dear brother with the early and chosen friend of her heart, an event which was now to take place in a few days. With what pleasure did she accompany her brother to his future habitation, and see the improvements making in it, and which were now nearly completed. True, it was but a straw-roofed cottage; but Catherine was aware that there would be more real happiness in it than in the splendid mansion she had lately left.

Jessy Monro (who thought now her presence was no longer necessary) wished to go to what she called her home, but the old people would not permit her; she had gained much on their affection during the winter; and as she had no parents, and only lived with a distant relation, they begged that in future she would make Glenerrach her principal place of abode.

On receiving this invitation, given with such genuine marks of kindness,

she burst into tears of gratitude, and gladly accepted of it.

Her case was that of many in the Highlands at that time. Her father had been a tacksman, and held a capital possession; but living up to his income, when the markets for black cattle fell, he was ruined; and not having courage to fight against adversity, he fell sick, and died literally of a broken heart.

His wife had preceded him to the grave; and his only child was left in a manner destitute, as all the furniture, and what little stock remained (which the creditors gave up to the orphan), did not bring, when sold, much more than £100. This one of her friends placed in safe hands, and the interest she was to receive for clothes; and among her friends she had her board, for the assistance she gave in any family she might be in for the time.

Hard, hard, to a feeling mind is a state of dependence, and keenly did poor Jessy feel it.

The person she lived mostly with was a cousin of her father's, a true Highlander, generous and kind-hearted. He had every wish that Jessy should be happy; but then he was seldom at home, being a drover; and his wife, the daughter of a rich Lowland farmer, did not know how to sympathise with a *poor* gentlewoman, and was constantly throwing out taunting hints of—"Puir lassies that wadna gang and doe ought for themsels, but wad contentedly sit at ither fowk's ingle-nook, for a' that their frinds had gart thae fowk lose siller by them; for her pairt (she would add), commen' me to the honest lass in the Lawlans, that wad ne'er haud frae ganging till service, for a' she wad hae a guid tocher of her ain."

Such was the language poor Jessy often heard from Mrs. Monro, who, no doubt, felt severely that her husband had lost considerably by Jessy's father. But he was still rich.

Another cause of vexation was a suspected attachment between Mrs. Monro's only son and Jessy. This young man was now at Inverness with a surgeon; and it was the fond mother's wish that he might get a rich wife, and become a gentleman.

So situated, it was no wonder Jessy accepted with joy the offer of Mrs. Fraser. In every respect she was treated as one of the family, and Catherine seldom got any piece of dress that Jessy did not get the same.

Every thing went on as one would wish in the preparations making for Archibald's marriage, and at the appointed time it took place. The old gentleman performed the ceremony.

They staid a few days at Ardveorlich, and then came to the manse, where the same festivities were carried on for some weeks. Early in May they took possession of their own cottage, which, being so near the manse, they were seldom separated for a whole

day. Mr. Cameron's house was also a very few miles from them,

Catherine often heard from Allan, but she was now getting a little uneasy at the silence of her friends in London, as she had neither heard from Mrs. Mortimer or Henry Gordon for some time, and by the last accounts Henly and Elizabeth were going on in the same unthinking way. This suspense was the worse to bear, as she had no one to communicate her thoughts to, being averse to making her parents or brother unhappy by telling them the fatal propensity Elizabeth had imbibed till it could be no longer avoided.

They had letters from Hector as often as opportunities would admit; but there was a degree of mystery in them lately which she could not account for. She feared she knew not what, and dreaded every day to hear of another act of precipitance; but she was obliged to bear all silently, as none of the family knew, except herself, of

Hector's attachment to Louisa Moreland.

It is time we should now account, in some measure, for the silence of Catherine's London correspondents. To do this we must go back to the period of Henly and Elizabeth's first arrival in London, and explain what was meant by saying they were the victims of an iniquitous plot.

Among the first evenings Henly, with all the pride of a fond and admiring husband, introduced his wife to some of his friends, and among the rest to Colonel Stanhope. He was delighted to see the admiration she excited in a man so justly acknowledged a judge of female beauty as the Colonel. But as that gentleman's sentiments will be better explained by his own words, we shall quote a conversation he had with a friend previous to his introduction to Elizabeth, and which was accidentally overheard by Gordon, then in a manner a stranger to Mrs.

Henly, but which was long remembered by him.

“Have you seen,” said Colonel Stanhope to his friend, “this Scottish divinity whom Henly has brought up to town?”

“Yes,” replied Major Turner, “I have.”

“I suppose her charms,” said Stanhope, “are much exaggerated, for what can she be or what can she know of life or fashion? I am told she is only the daughter of a country clergyman. She must be quite a rustic.”

“Perhaps not so much as Mrs. Harrington or her associates, who are made up of art and dissimulation,” answered Major Turner; “but I’ll answer for it she has entirely the manners of a lady, and what is better, seems quite artless and unconscious of her own perfections. But you can now judge for yourself, for here she comes, leaning on the arm of Morris.”

Stanhope turned round and exclaim-

ed in ecstasy—"By heavens, an angel! I must be introduced, and see if in time I cannot make her smile on me. I have madè beauties, equally fair and equally tenacious of their good name, become reconciled to my attentions."

"Ah! you are in the wrong box here, Stanhope," answered Turner, "for she is devoted to her husband, and so is he to her."

"Oh," said the Colonel, "we shall see what she will be six months hence. I know Henly's disposition well, and however he may be devoted to her at present, I shall still entertain hopes—"

"Which I trust," interrupted Turner, "will never be realised; for much should I grieve to see so charming a creature become a victim to your arts. See it I certainly will not, as I am just on the eve of embarking for the Peninsula."

"No," cried Stanhope, "but hear of it you will, my boy! But come, I am impatient to be introduced to her, that

I may read her character, and lay siege accordingly.”

The introduction took place, and the two families, from the former acquaintance of the gentlemen, became intimate.

Although long, long accustomed to read the minds of women of a common stamp of character, still it was a length of time before Colonel Stanhope could ascertain the vulnerable part of Elizabeth's. He saw her followed and admired,—still he saw that she seemed to have no wish to gain such admiration, and appeared devoted to the society of her husband.

At last, the eagerness with which she seemed to watch the sums lost and won at a card-table, and the interest she expressed for the losers, gave him hopes that he had discovered her weakness.

Unfortunately at this time Morris and his wife (who had hitherto been Elizabeth's constant companion in pub-

lic) received their orders for leaving England, and the ill-fated Mrs. Henly was left to choose her own associates, and in an evil hour, from her fascinating manner, one of her chief was Mrs. Harrington.

This Stanhope hailed as a fortunate omen for his views, but he was cautious. He gently hinted to Mrs. Harrington that he wished her to encourage Mrs. Henly in her love of play, and to introduce her to the faro-table; also, that he wished she might be permitted, for some time, to be a winner, and insinuated that her own (Mrs. Harrington's) purse should not suffer.

Had he boldly declared his views to his associate, it is more than probable, depraved as she was in principle, she would have shrunk from such an office; but he knew the human heart too well to startle her by any thing so glaring. He knew also Henly's instability of disposition, and at one of the routs at Mrs. Harrington's, where they both

often met, he introduced him to a young lively widow, who soon so completely engrossed his attention, that he (apparently at least) seemed ignorant of his wife's fatal increasing propensity.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER reading the foregoing chapter, will the reader be surprised that the young, the artless, and innocent Elizabeth (who being incapable of guile herself suspected it not in others) should fall into the snare laid for her? As to Henly, even the smiles of the gay coquette could not long allure him from the fascinations of the hazard-table, and at the time of Catherine's arrival in London his mind was continually occupied by it.

The arrival of Mrs. Henly's sister in London gave a sort of check to the plans of the associates, till they could ascertain what influence she was likely to have over her sister. But they soon perceived that the love of gaming had got too deep a root to be easily shaken,

and that immediately after her confinement she pursued it with as much eagerness as ever. Still they did not regret Miss Fraser's departure from London. Indeed it would seem that all Elizabeth's kind friends, who were able and willing to watch over her, were at this time removed from her. Mr. and Mrs. Morris were gone. Alexander had sailed. Mrs. Mortimer's late loss had prevented her mixing in society, and Henly was solely given up to his own pursuits,—so that there was no one near her to warn her of her danger.

Henry Gordon alone watched the motions of her enemies, and was ready to step forth her guardian as soon as they should unveil themselves.

But with all her love for cards, with all the inattention her husband paid to her movements, or to the company she kept, no insinuation ever could be thrown out against her except for gaming,—and what could be worse? When a woman devotes her time to

that baneful vice, husband, child, house, and every domestic duty is forgotten.

Such was Elizabeth's case at the time we now return to her at Portman Square. Seldom did her head ever touch her pillow till morning was far advanced, and never did she leave her room till long after midday. Her little cherub infant she saw once or twice a-day, and certainly liked her better than any thing but cards. Her husband she seldom saw, except at dinner, after which, when she went to some friend's house to play cards, he repaired to Brookes's.

Mrs. Morton, the lady we formerly mentioned, was already given up, and he had for some time past openly supported an opera dancer.

To Mrs. Henly Colonel Stanhope had always appeared a totally different character to what he was in reality. From his being a married, and not a very young man, she had treated him always with a greater degree of famili-

arity than her other male acquaintances. He thought it now time to turn the scale, and see what effect adversity would have on his intended victim.

Accordingly her luck was not for some time so great; she however bore it well, her card purse being still amply supplied. But the more unfortunate she proved, the more anxious she became to retrieve her loss, and she staked higher and higher, till she lost every thing she had formerly won, and something considerable besides.

She however, without hesitation, asked it from her husband, and he, on giving her the money, hinted that he wished how seldom she should make the application, as he had calls for all his cash except what he allowed her for household expenses, which was very considerable.

She was not at all intimidated at this, and more than once renewing the application, got a supply. At last Henly told her he would advance no

more—she must give up play as she was become so unfortunate. This was more than she could do, and she at last communicated her distress to Mrs. Harrington, who laughed at her uneasiness.

“ My dear creature,” said she, “ what ails you ? I’ll soon put you on a method of raising money—pawn your jewels.”

“ Pawn my jewels !” exclaimed Elizabeth. “ Never ! I would be in constant terror lest Henly should find it out, and I am sure he never would forgive me for such a step.”

“ Well then,” replied Mrs. Harrington, “ let him give you more money.”

“ Oh, do not blame him,” said poor Elizabeth, “ as within a very short space of time he has given me upwards of five hundred pounds.”

“ And what is that,” cried the artful Mrs. Harrington, “ to what he daily lavishes on his favourite opera dancer, whom he has openly taken under his protection ?”

Poor Elizabeth, who, in the midst of every gaiety, notwithstanding appearances, preferred her husband to every other being, was unprepared for this, and appeared quite shocked.

Mrs. Harrington, who continued her conversation, said, " Bless me ! is it possible you never heard this before ? Well, I declare, I am quite sorry to be the first to tell you ; but it is a circumstance so well known in the fashionable world, that I was certain you must have heard of it. But why make yourself so uneasy ? It is so common an occurrence, that, if I were you, I would not care, if he gave me plenty of money."

This was doctrine so different to the early lessons of morality which had been instilled into the mind of Elizabeth, that she was inexpressibly shocked, but her pride supported her. She said no more on the subject, but reverted to that of the jewels, and promised to go next day with Mrs. Harrington, to raise a sufficient sum to pay her debts,

and to commence a new career at the card-table.

It was with a heavy heart that Elizabeth returned to her abode, when she began to reflect on what she had heard. Conscience said, "Have you been free from blame? Have you agreed to the wish of your husband, in staying more at home, and in the choice of your amusements and associates abroad?" Alas! poor infatuated Elizabeth! She could derive no comfort from a retrospection of her own actions, except that her own heart had never swerved from its first possessor, and that she had never given the tongue of slander room to speak. She weakly thought that this would entitle her to upbraid her husband with his follies, if he refused her money the first time she should ask it of him again.

Mistaken Elizabeth! His deviation from propriety is no cause for your continuing a life of such imprudence.

She next day kept her appointment

with Mrs. Harrington, and raised £300 on her jewels; at the same time she obtained a promise from the person she left them with, that at any time she might require them for a day, she should have them for some trifling consideration.

What a striking instance is here displayed of the rapid influence evil example, and a love of that baneful vice gaming, acquires over quick feelings. Who would suppose that the same artless Elizabeth, who was introduced to our readers scarce two years ago, blooming in health, and happy in the enjoyment of every innocent amusement, is the same we now find immersed in fashionable follies (to give them no harsher name), careless of home, and of what society her husband kept?—her complexion fading with the late hours she herself keeps, and her constitution much impaired from the same cause; and, in order to banish thought, anxious always to be in a crowd, as if

that would drown a recollection of past scenes.

Yet such is the case, and when a reflecting moment did come (for they would sometimes intrude), she would consider the foolish part she was acting, and say to herself, “ To-morrow I shall write to Kate, confess the thoughtless life I am leading, and beg of her to give me aid in reforming. Yes, I positively will write to-morrow. Yet, as I am engaged to go to-morrow forenoon to a sale of pictures, and in the evening to Mrs. Stanhope’s——But next day will do as well.” Thus, day after day passed. Fatal procrastination! how many have been irrecoverably lost by adopting it!

It was no wonder, when we read this, that Catherine received no letters from her sister, or that her uneasiness was extreme, when she received one from Henry Gordon, mentioning that, from all he heard, Henry’s fortune could not long stand his extra-

vagance and his losses at the gaming-table : he gently hinted also that Mrs. Henly had been for some time more unfortunate than usual.

Catherine, on receiving this letter, was much shocked ; but she knew that was not the way to save her sister. She therefore roused herself, and said she would remain silent no longer, but point out her danger to Elizabeth. She was prevented from putting her plan into execution so soon as she intended, by an event we must now relate to the reader.

Catherine had gone over to spend a few days with her sister-in-law, when, as they were both seated at work after dinner (Archy having left them a short time before to look after his work-people), they were astonished at the arrival of an express which had been forwarded to Catherine from the manse. He was the bearer of a large packet, addressed for her in an unknown hand-writing.

Both ladies were a good deal startled

—both thought of Allan; and, in addition, Catherine had her sister's situation constantly in view.

As soon as her trepidation permitted, she broke the seal, and a letter addressed to herself by Hector appeared, and another, also for her, in the same hand-writing as the envelope. This she opened first, and from it dropped a paper, which Anne took up, and giving it a cursory glance, exclaimed, "What is this? a certificate signed by one of the clergymen at Plymouth of the marriage of Hector Fraser to Louisa Moreland in March last!"

"Rash, unthinking Hector!" cried Catherine, on her sister-in-law reading the certificate aloud; "is this the way you keep the promise you made to me? But let me not be rash in judging. I shall first see what the partner of your affections says, as I suppose this must be from her."

She now unfolded the letter, and read as follows:—

“ With a trembling hand and agitated heart do I venture to address the beloved sister of my ever dear Hector ; and do not, I entreat you, be disgusted at my boldness, as you may perceive I do so at his desire. Read my story, therefore, with indulgence, and for *his* sake take me to your protection.

“ Hector has already told you of our mutual attachment, but it is left for me to give you a reason for acting contrary to your advice, in marrying without the consent of our respective parents.

“ When Hector left you in London, he told me all that had passed between you as to our immediate marriage. I told him I thought we ought to be grateful to you for your advice, and abide by it. A few days, however, after his arrival, he and I became alarmed at the attentions paid to me by an old gentleman belonging to the victualling-office at Plymouth. I call him old, as he was a contemporary of my father’s. Hector

prepared for sea in a state of the greatest agitation, entreating my permission to ask me of my parents; but I knew them, and was convinced such a step would be our ruin.

‘ Well,’ said he, ‘ Louisa, I yield; but remember, that when I return into port, if I find this old gentleman as much here, and that his attentions to you are as evident, I will be put off no longer.’

“ I told him not to be uneasy; that I would be firm, and nothing but force (and not even that) would make me alter my mind.

“ He sailed, and with him, I may say, all my fortitude; for I could not shew what I felt, as none of the family knew of our attachment.

“ He had not been long gone, when my parents made use of every argument they could, in order to induce me to listen to the addresses of Mr. Horton; but I was determined, though I gave no reason for my obstinacy. I

wrote to your brother how matters were, and he answered it under cover to a cousin of mine, who was his most intimate and confidential friend, that he had formed a plan, which I must agree to as soon as he should return.

“ With much anxiety did I look forward to this event. At last he came, and I flew to my aunt’s the first opportunity to meet him. She lived a little way out of town; and my occasionally staying there a short time excited no surprise. Hector had influence enough over her to gain her to his side; and at last I was prevailed on to agree to a private marriage.

‘ I am convinced,’ said Hector, ‘ we could not obtain your parents’ consent; and to act in direct opposition would be worse: nor shall I say a word to my own parents, as my father has too much pride ever to give his separate consent. But I hope much from all their love, when they find it will be too late to separate us.’

“ These arguments, aided by my love for Hector, induced me to comply ; and the banns were regularly published, in a church where my parents never went: The clergyman of that church performed the ceremony.

“ A few days after this your brother sailed, satisfied that I was now securely his, and I returned home ; but not before he had given me the enclosed letter for you, in case any thing unforeseen should discover the marriage, and that my own parents should withdraw their protection from me, that I might, through your intercession, be received by yours. That time is now arrived, as I have been obliged to declare my marriage, in order to put a stop to their entreaties, nay, even threatened force, to compel me to marry Mr. Horton.

“ The rage of my father I cannot describe ; and notwithstanding all the entreaties I used to remain where I was till I could hear from Hector, he was

inexorable, and literally turned me out of doors, telling me to go to those who had aided me in deceiving him ; but that by his treatment of me he would prevent any of my sisters following my example.

“ I took his advice, and went to my aunt’s, where I remained till I could find some safe conveyance to Scotland. Fortune in this instance favoured me, as the ship on board of which my cousin was first-lieutenant was ordered round to Leith ; and he had interest to obtain leave for me to come in her.

“ As soon as I recovered the effects of my long voyage, my kind cousin took out a ticket for me in the northern mail ; and here I am, anxiously waiting to know, whether, now that I am expelled the house of my natural parents, I will be received into that of my adopted ones. I fear that any thing I can say will have no effect, unless the letter which accompanies this will, aided by your intercession, obtain pardon for our precipitance.

“ I leave you now to read your dear brother’s letter ; and Oh ! may it raise a friend in your bosom for your affectionate sister,

LOUISA FRASER.

“ *Inverness.*”

Catherine read over this little simple tale with much emotion, and handing it to Mrs. Archibald Fraser, she took up Hector’s, at the same time mentally regretting, that, in all probability, there would be in their family a second victim of precipitance.

Heetor’s letter was as follows :—

“ MY EVER DEAR KATE,

“ When you read this letter, the being who delivers it to you will have, from her love to me, thrown off the protection of her own parents. Oh, then, Kate, if ever your brother was dear to you, plead with mine to take her to their arms ! Weigh well the unfortunate situation she is left in—so totally unprotected. Were I not per-

fectly convinced of the amiable disposition she possesses, and the purity of her mind, I would not ask such a thing. Take her therefore to your heart, lead her to our revered parents, and on her knees let her implore pardon for us both for our rashness. Think of her youth, but just seventeen; and let that, added to your love of me, induce you to listen to the prayers and entreaties of my dearest Kate's affectionate brother,

“HECTOR FRASER.”

CHAPTER XI.

ARCHIBALD FRASER at this moment coming in, his wife and sister shewed him the letters they had been perusing, and the latter gave a full explanation of all she had formerly heard from Hector, and asked him what he would advise her to do.

“ My advice to you,” said Archy, “ is to return home immediately, and tell every thing candidly to our father, and implore the protection so eagerly asked for by Hector for this our new and seemingly interesting connection.”

“ You must return with me, my dear Archy, for I have not courage to brave my father’s displeasure alone for concealing this business; but had I ever supposed it would have terminated so soon in this way, I would have insisted

on Hector telling it to his father himself."

"You need not be afraid, my dear Kate," said Archibald, "of our father's displeasure; he would never wish you to be guilty of a breach of confidence, and he has too much reason to be pleased with your general conduct to suppose that you would ever intentionally sanction any thing clandestine. However, I shall return with you, though not to screen you from our parent's anger, but to save time, and consult what ought to be done, for there is no time to lose. And do you, Anne," said he, turning to his wife, "put up a couple of shirts, and every thing requisite, as it is likely I may be obliged to set off early to-morrow morning for Inverness."

Catherine being now ready, this affectionate brother and sister set off on their walk, as they were aware the family at the manse would be anxious to know the cause of the express. They

arrived just before supper was put on the table; and immediately after that meal was over, Archibald made his communication to the worthy couple, who received the information with much surprise; and although they could not free Hector from blame, they could not exonerate the parents of Louisa from some degree of censure, in wishing to force her to marry a man so unsuitable to her in years, from interested motives.

With these sentiments it will readily be believed that there was no great persuasion requisite to induce Mr. Fraser to urge his son to set off next morning for Inverness, to bring his sister-in-law to the manse, and to assure her of his paternal protection.

Catherine would not detain her brother to write to Louisa, but begged of Archibald to assure her verbally of her sisterly affection.

Tamtallach was on the road to Inverness, and it was fixed, before the

family separated for the night, that he should set out by break of day, take an early breakfast with his wife, and proceed immediately on his journey, as they were well aware Louisa would be suffering much from suspense; and, from this plan, Archy would be with her before she could well look for the return of the messenger.

At the same time Archibald was told to bid his wife prepare matters for her remaining at the manse till her husband's return.

As soon as all this was settled, the family separated for the night.

Catherine felt a good deal relieved, when she considered that the discovery of Hector's marriage was so happily over; and she could not but approve of all her father had said of his rashness. Although her mind was lightened of one source of anxiety, still Elizabeth's situation haunted her. But this she nobly resolved to conceal (at least for a time). But she was certain her father suspect-

ed all was not as it should be in London, as he often expressed his surprise at the irregularity of Elizabeth's correspondence.- On these occasions she would laugh and say, no news was good news.

Next day Anne joined the young party at the manse, and assisted them in preparing the room destined for Mrs. Hector Fraser.

Letters had arrived from the Cape from Alexander, and they soon hoped to hear of his arrival at Madras.

Catherine also heard from Mrs. Morris, who said she hoped to be in London the following spring, hinting that wish was strengthened by hearing rumours of their brother and sister's imprudence, from a quarter ignorant of their connection.

On the day appointed, Archibald and his interesting charge arrived. By her sweet and engaging manners, she had, even on their short acquaintance, engaged his affection; but it required all

his eloquence to reassure her, as the time drew near which was to bring her into the presence of her new father. But all her fears were forgotten, when the old man kindly met her at the door, took her in his arms, and bid her welcome to that house which would be her home till her husband could provide her a better. He then led her to his wife, who received her with equal kindness.

Catherine and Anne both felt anxious to shew the interesting stranger the kind feelings they had towards her.

Jessy Monro was introduced to her at dinner-time, as a friend of the family; and a very few days served to endear Louisa to all the family. There was a sort of playfulness about her, now that her mind was at ease, which was very pleasing to the old people; and she very soon felt perfectly reconciled to her situation, and became a universal favourite among her new connections.

Immediately after her arrival at the manse, she had written to Hector and to her father. She told the latter, that although she felt herself so happy in the family of her husband, yet it would make her more so, could she receive his pardon.

Mr. Moreland had begun to regret his harshness; and replied to Louisa by saying that she was entirely forgiven; and that when Hector should return to port, he would find a home at his house,—he had written him to that purpose. Also, that he was ready to deliver up the thousand pounds left her by her grandmother, payable to her either at her marriage, or when she should have attained the age of twenty-one.

This letter delighted the young creature, who now declared she had no wish but to see Hector.

Catherine's idea of writing to her sister was now renewed, by a letter from Elizabeth, complaining of Henly's un-

kindness in refusing her money, and also of the great change in his affections, as he now openly lavished great sums on the lady under his protection, and spent with her as much of his time as he could spare from the gaming-table; in short, that he was quite a different being to what he appeared at the manse, or a few months after his marriage.

Catherine lost no time in writing to her infatuated and unthinking sister. Her letter was to the following effect:—

“ Your last to me, my dearest Elizabeth, is a confirmation of my worst fears, viz. that in consequence of your own imprudence, you have alienated the affections of your husband. Start not when I say this, but rather reflect on the measures to be adopted to save you from further misery.

“ Your case, my sister, is dangerous, and I must probe you to the quick, in order to rouse you to reflection.

“ At the time you married, you had every prospect of happiness. You obtained the man you were attached to, and who on his side gave every proof of sincere love for you.

“ On your arrival in London, new to the gay world and its fascinations, you were led by them quite out of your usual sphere. Your husband, equally fond of gaiety, and still adoring you, was unwilling to curb your pleasures, and foolishly permitted your enjoyment of every thing gay, till he feared for your health. He then wished to restrain you, but it was too late ; he had lost all authority over you, and you had lost all fondness for domestic life.

“ Unfortunately, you both at this time formed severally acquaintance with people who, in place of endeavouring to lead either of you back to a proper way of thinking, have, for their own ends, confirmed you in your several follies ; and he is now, apparently, a confirmed libertine, and you, Eliza-

beth a decided gambler, laying yourself open to all the vicissitudes and miseries attending that character. Yes, Elizabeth! start when I tell you, that the female gambler lays herself open to the snares of the seducer; and that however free from every other failing she may be, that vice alone ensures her the censures of the correct part of society. Thankful am I that as yet the breath of slander has not attacked you; but how am I to be assured how long it may remain silent, when the world sees that in place of endeavouring to reclaim your husband, or attend to your interesting child, your whole time is taken up at the card-table? How is that dear infant neglected! left to the care of domestics, who will not conceive it at all *their* duty to attend her as they ought, when her mother neglects her so much! And Oh, Elizabeth, my beloved sister, how must that first of all duties, your duty to your Maker, be neglected? — or if,

from the force of habit, still attended to, how must it be slurred over, when every moment is regretted that you pass away from cards? Ask your own conscience, Elizabeth, have you the same wish to approach the Throne of Mercy, with supplication and prayer, as you had, not only when you left Glenerrach, but when you first arrived in London,—when your mind was free from this fatal propensity? Oh, Elizabeth, why, when your mind first began to wander, did you not pray fervently, to guard you against temptation? But, my sister, it is not yet too late. Take courage, and boldly throw off your present associates, — resolve to give up your fatal propensity, and endeavour to recal your husband's affection. Believe me, a little courage is alone necessary; and be not laughed out of your good resolutions. Remember that you stand on the brink of a precipice!—one step more, and you are lost to society! Draw back in time,

and you will be received with joy by your deserving friends. What boots it to you the opinion of the vain and frivolous? When you (however innocently), by adhering to your present mode of conduct, lose that respectable rank in the world you are entitled to enjoy, will those you now prefer associating with uphold you? No, no! and be assured, my dear sister, however consoling conscious innocence may be, it avails but little in opposition to the opinion of the world, above which no female ought to be; when she despises that, she is lost.

“ You will say perhaps, Elizabeth, that I have written harshly; but when the disease is deeply-rooted, the remedy must be severe. And you may rest assured you will not read this with more pain than I have written it. Your parents know nothing of my writing, nor do Anne nor Archibald. And, dearest sister, let your future conduct be such, that they may remain in igno-

rance that you could ever receive such a letter from your attached

— “CATHERINE FRASER.”

Catherine said truly she wrote the above letter with pain; it cost her many tears, and her family could not conjecture what caused the gloom which all at once came over her; but conscious she had done her duty, she soon regained her usual spirits, and hoped much from Elizabeth's innate sense of religion, knowing, that when the mind has early had a proper bias, although it may for a time be led away by dissipation and evil example, it never becomes entirely depraved, but in the end recovers its usual tone, and proper way of thinking.

Louisa had about this time letters from Hector. He had been a few days only at Plymouth. These he spent at her father's, where he had been kindly treated; but he said he was ordered off instantly as one of the convoy for the

West Indian fleet; but on his return he would arrange every thing for her comfort, and if possible for their meeting; meantime, begged her to be happy where she was, as he was convinced every thing would be done to make her so.—This was in fact the case. She was a universal favourite; and at the annual kirk, which the good old man would on no account neglect, she took Elizabeth's place.

On this evening a little incident occurred which excited some very painful feelings in Catherine's mind. Flora, the poor maniac formerly mentioned, came to the ball, dressed with all the inconsistency of her situation. On seeing Louisa (who had arrived since she had been last at Glenerrach), she sprung to her, and taking her by the hand, exclaimed,—“ Oich! Oich! my ain Miss Lizzibeth, me be very glad ye be come back.”

Louisa started and looked about, at this attack.

Flora stared, and in a manner throw-

ing away the hand she had taken, said—"Wha ta de'el be ye, tat ha'e ta'en Miss Lizzy's place? Are ye tither Sassenach come to bring dule to the manse?"

Catherine saw Louisa's distress, and relieved her by telling Flora, in Gaelic, that she was Hector's wife.

"Bhein (wife) Maister Eachen! O-chone, ma chree (my heart) ye be welcome to Glenerrach. Ye be bonnie, me hope ye be gude; but I'm wae he tak ta Sassenach; dey no' be like ta Highlanders. Me be see in ta day and night dat Miss Lizzy no' be happy; but ye maunna say dis to ta minister, nor ta leddie; but dey be ken it shune anugh."

Louisa made no reply to this, thinking it the wanderings of a deranged person.

Catherine, however, had observed what passed, and sighed as she walked away.

From this time Flora shewed great attachment to Louisa.

CHAPTER XII.

AN early harvest generally makes a long winter, but in so affectionate and social a family as that of Mr. Fraser's of Glennerrach, that was not looked on with dread. No one, save Catherine, knew any cause of uneasiness, and she was of too generous a disposition to damp their happiness by shewing what she really felt. If at any time there appeared more gravity in her countenance than usual, all attributed it to the anxiety she felt for Allan Cameron's safety; and then the three families would unite in trying to amuse her mind, and she would gratefully exert herself to reward their cares by appearing more cheerful.

But she could not entirely banish thought, and it was in the dead hour of

night, when every eye, save her own, was closed in forgetfulness, that her mind was occupied by the unhappy state of Elizabeth.

“ They think I mourn for Allan,” she would say to herself on these occasions ; “ and why should I ? If he dies, he will die in the discharge of his duty, fighting for his country ; and sincerely would I mourn for him. But what would my feelings be, even allowing the worst, in comparison to what I dread from Elizabeth’s present mode of conduct ? I cannot break the hearts of my parents by telling them that the dear child they parted with, not yet two years ago, in all the bloom of happiness and innocence, is now running such a career of folly,—and may I not soon have to add guilt ? But no,” she would add with energy, “ Elizabeth Fraser never can forget the early lessons of piety so carefully instilled into her mind by the best of parents.”

Thus would Catherine argue, anx-

ious to keep the evil communication from the rest, generously resolving to bear all on herself rather than make her friends unhappy one minute before it was absolutely requisite, and fervently praying for strength of mind to support her. Her prayers were heard.—But we must now leave her, nobly exerting herself, and return to poor Elizabeth.

We left her, after writing to her sister, complaining of her husband's change of affection, and his cruelty in refusing her money.

She felt a little relieved after writing this (as she conceived) just complaint, and anxiously expected an answer. When it arrived, how eagerly did she break the seal, expecting consolation! but how different were her feelings as she went on!

She started, as from a dream, and exclaimed—“Cruel Kate! is it possible you could write so harsh a letter to me? Is it possible you look on me as

a common gambler? But let me read it once more, and see if I cannot find some consolation."

She did read it, and did reflect on it line by line. She *did* ask her conscience. What was the reply? Alas! nothing consoling; for she was forced to acknowledge she had no pleasure anywhere save at the card-table.

"But," said she to herself, "I am free of one failing—no one has dared to speak a word that it would be improper for me to hear; so there my sister has gone too far. Yet I will stop, as she says, ere it be too late; but I must first endeavour to get as much as will discharge my debt of one hundred pounds to Colonel Stanhope, which he won of me last night. He told me not to be in a hurry with it, but I cannot bear to be in his debt. I have often lent Mrs. Harrington when I was more fortunate than she was—surely she will not now refuse me."

Such was Mrs. Henly's soliloquy

when she reperused her sister's letter, and she was on the point of writing Mrs. Harrington when that lady was announced. She was surprised to see her *dear friend* so grave, and asked her what was the matter?

“ Oh, nothing, my dear creature, but I was just going to write you, to see if you could lend me a hundred pounds to pay Colonel Stanhope, till I get my next quarter's allowance, as I would rather be in your debt than his.”

“ Well, this is the most unfortunate circumstance,” answered Mrs. Harrington, “ for I have positively come to ask the same favour of you. I have not a shilling but what is completely tied up. Never mind Stanhope; I am sure he will not urge you to pay him, and no saying what this night may do; at all events, why not ask your husband?”

“ I dare not,” said Elizabeth; “ besides, I never see him, and he has become so altered in his behaviour that I know not what to make of him.”

Mrs. Harrington did not remain much longer, and Elizabeth was again alone, and again reading over her sister's letter, when Colonel Stanhope was announced. She started from her reverie, and received him with as much composure as she could command. They spoke for a while on indifferent subjects, and as soon as Elizabeth had acquired sufficient resolution, she apologised to him for not having it in her power to settle her debt, but that he might rely on it in a few days. He begged she would not say a word about such a trifle, sat a little longer, and then bid her good-morning.

They again met that evening, and Elizabeth could not help observing that Colonel Stanhope was much more attentive to her than usual; but she attributed this to his not wishing her to suppose he felt any disappointment at her not being able to pay him the money. Henly was of the party that night, and she felt quite pleased at the

earnestness with which he watched her movements; it gave her spirits a fillip, notwithstanding her bad luck, and that she had increased her debt to Stanhope. Deluded Elizabeth! on what a precipice did she stand! How much was she deceived by appearances!

It was not with eyes of affection Henly watched her, but with those of jealousy, a passion which had been carefully instilled into his mind by his mistress, at the instigation of Stanhope, whose tool she was.

It was only very lately that Colonel Stanhope's free way of living, and the real character he had as to females, was made known to Henly. No wonder then that he was shocked to observe his wife borrow money from such a man, and at the same time exhibiting an unusual flow of spirits, which he attributed to quite another cause than the real one, which was, that from her husband watching her so closely, and even fancying sometimes that he mark-

ed her with eyes of tenderness, she flattered herself that if the good resolutions formed by her, in consequence of Catherine's letter, were followed up, she might yet regain his love.

He never dreamed that his way of life had any influence over Elizabeth's conduct, or that she cared about his love. He fancied her entirely given up to the love of gaming and all its baneful consequences—an idea kept up in him by his worthless associate. No wonder, then, that he watched her assiduously, to try if she gave him cause to believe there was any truth in the insinuations held out to him of her regard for Stanhope.

To do him justice, he was very unwilling to believe her guilty, notwithstanding all that had been suggested to him. He did, more than once, look at her with a sort of suppressed tenderness, when he recollected what she was, and what she might have been had he allowed her to remain in her native

glen, where she was in the enjoyment of every peaceful and innocent amusement; whereas, by his precipitance, he had plunged himself and her in irreparable misfortune, as will be afterwards seen. Nor can we exonerate him from blame. Notwithstanding his rashness, all might have been well after his arrival in London, had he been firm in trying to restrain her when he thought she was becoming too fond of dissipation; but by that time he had lost his authority over her, and would not be dictated to.

Stanhope, who knew Henly's disposition well, knew that, after imbibing suspicions against her, he would not be able to conceal them; and he augured much from the displeasure which he was aware Elizabeth would feel towards her husband after this discovery. He conceived her offended pride would be a great auxiliary in his cause; but he never was more deceived than he was in Mrs. Henly's character. It was re-

served for the *rustic* who knew nothing of life, to convince him that she knew what virtue and good principles were, although appearances were at present against her.

The day after the party already mentioned, Henly sent to tell his lady he would breakfast with her. This was a pleasing confirmation of what her ideas were the evening before; and she was, in her own mind, looking forward to many happy days, when they should be both cured of their follies. But all these pleasing visions vanished, when she observed the stern expression of Henly's countenance, on coming into the room. This threw a damp over poor Elizabeth's features, which could not fail being remarked by any observer less interested than her husband was.

After the breakfast things were removed, Henly sat silent for some minutes; and his wife felt as if something terrible was impending over her.

At last he broke silence, by saying,—
“Your spirits do not seem to be so good as they were last night, Mrs. Henly.”

“No,” answered she, with some pique, “the *cause* of my good *spirits* last night is removed.”

“I thought so,” said her husband; “you have no longer Colonel Stanhope to pay you that attention which, as a married man, it is so very wrong in him to pay; and, as a married woman, it is so improper for you to receive.”

Elizabeth, totally unconscious of any improper feeling towards Colonel Stanhope, or of his having views towards her, not consistent with the most strict propriety, replied rather indignantly, and denied that he had any influence over her mind. “But, take care,” added she, “Mr. Henly, and do not make an imaginary fault of mine be any plea for your own improper conduct. Your public protection of an opera dancer is well known to me.”

“ You will also remember,” said he, “ that the custom of the world passes over silently in a man what would be highly injurious to the reputation of a woman. And that if you are careless of yours, I will guard my honour and that of my child, so that no finger of scorn shall ever point at her as the offspring of a mother of a blemished character. And remember, Mrs. Henly, that from this time I prohibit your receiving the visits of Colonel Stanhope.”

Elizabeth, with all the pride and indignation of offended virtue, sat some time silent. She at last calmly told him she would not be dictated to by him what company she was to receive, and that as long as the Colonel behaved as he had hitherto done, she had nothing to object to in his society.”

Henly bid her beware of carrying matters too far in opposition to his wishes, and left her.

All the spirit Elizabeth had shewn towards her husband (which was the

effect of offended pride) fled with him, and she sat resting her head on her hand, ruminating on Catherine's letter. "Alas!" said she, "my beloved sister, I fear your prophecy may be in some measure fulfilled! How bitterly do I reflect on myself for my past conduct! How blame-worthy has it been! I am now determined," said she, mentally, "to give up cards. I will only venture till enabled to pay my debt to Colonel Stanhope, and then give them up for ever."

Elizabeth! where was your good genius now, that did not bring you to your husband,—confess to him your errors, and implore him to forgive you? He was of too generous a disposition ever to withhold it from you. But pride, that vile passion that prevents us from acknowledging a fault, though conscious of our deserving forgiveness, kept you back. Had you yielded then, all might have been well—holding back, decided your future fate.

She was still seated in this attitude, contrasting her present situation with the happiness she had hoped for at her marriage—the unbidden tears gently stealing down her cheek at the retrospect—when the sound of a carriage at the door startled her; and she was just going to give orders to admit no one, when Colonel Stanhope's name was announced. She dried up her tears, and received him with as much *sang froid* as she could command.

“ I fear, Mrs. Henly,” said the Colonel, “ you are indisposed; or does any thing make you uneasy? Yet why need I ask, when Mr. Henly's conduct is so well known, and since it is notorious, that although he is so sparing of his cash to his wife, he is not so to his mistress?”

Mrs. Henly, who had ever avoided giving (to gentlemen at least) an idea of her knowledge of Henly's infidelity, felt hurt at this speech, and said, rather smartly, that there was nothing but a

slight headache the matter with her, which would soon be removed; and that, allowing that there was any thing unpleasant, which there was not, between her husband and her, it would not be necessary to call in the aid of a stranger to settle it; "and if I am at present," added she, "a little embarrassed, it is owing to my own folly, and not to the *niggardliness* of my husband. As to what I owe you, Colonel Stanhope, a few days will see it repaid to you."

Elizabeth felt a good deal irritated. However she might feel offended herself at Henly, her generous heart would not allow another to blame him.

Colonel Stanhope assured her that she had mistaken his meaning, as he was in no hurry to receive his money; "and believe me, my dear Mrs. Henly, that one smile from you will make me forget there ever was such a transaction." He then proceeded, encouraged by Elizabeth's silence, to make declarations which could no longer be mis-

taken, concluding by saying that her husband's neglect of her and known infidelity would justify her in the eyes of the world.

He here paused, expecting an answer, and rose to take Elizabeth's hand. She rose also, and, with apparent composure, spoke to the following purpose: —“ If I have allowed *you*, Colonel Stanhope, to remain so long unanswered; it was from no other feeling than that of contempt, and my not having words sufficiently strong to mark my abhorrence of such language. You! the husband of an amiable woman, and the father of a promising family, to hold such language to one who has hitherto looked on you as a friend! But go, sir; and from this time forth recollect, that if ever I hold converse with you, it will be from the idea of not embroiling my husband, rather than any wish to keep up a further intimacy; and thank my fears for his life, and the peace of mind of your injured wife, that I do not ex-

pose you to the just contempt of the world. What have you ever seen in my conduct to warrant such presumption?"

"Your warmth, madam," replied he, "astonishes me. I certainly had no reason to suppose my declaration would be received with such indignation from the general tenor of your behaviour to me."

"If I have behaved to you, sir, with more frankness than to others, it was from no other motive than supposing, that in every situation age was entitled to respect. But leave me, sir; every word I listen to from you lessens me in my own esteem."

She then rung—ordered Colonel Stanhope's carriage to be called up, and calmly wished him good-morning.

So dignified is real virtue, that the most depraved libertine bends to it. Such was the case here; for Colonel Stanhope had not a word to say. He who used to boast that the most imperious beauties had yielded to his smiles,

bowed most profoundly, left the room and the house, cursing his own folly in being awed by any woman.

His visit excited no surprise in the servants, as he was in the habit of frequently calling both for their master and mistress.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALL Elizabeth's firmness forsook her on the disappearance of the Colonel; and the nurse, passing the drawing-room door a few minutes after, on looking in, saw her lady stretched on the floor in a sort of fit. Having the baby in her arms, she could give no aid herself, but she rung the bell violently, which brought more than one servant to her assistance. The house-keeper and Mrs. Henly's own maid raised her and carried her to her bedroom, and one of the men-servants was dispatched for the nearest medical aid, and another for the family physician. Elizabeth, from her natural sweetness of temper, had endeared herself to every individual in the house, and no means were left by them untried to restore

her to animation. The housekeeper seeing the nurse so much agitated, begged of her to leave the room, which she did in tears.

Mrs. Henly in a short time evinced signs of returning life, and ere the surgeon arrived she was completely restored to animation, but, alas! not to sense, as it was soon observed that she was quite delirious; and from the vacant stare she gave round, as if in search of some one, it was evident that she knew none of those about her. The surgeon asked if Mrs. Henly had received any shock, as it seemed visible that she dreaded seeing something unpleasant. The women, who were even ignorant of what visitors had been there that day, declared they could not tell, but they rather thought not.

The physician having now arrived, and heard every thing, gave his opinion that she should be bled, which was done copiously. She spoke a little; at first they could not understand her, but

at last they plainly heard her say—" I will not tell Henly—indeed I will not; for I know if I did there would be bloodshed." She then screamed out in a most piteous manner—" Oh! do not let me ever see him again! how have I been deceived!" She said a great deal more, but in so incoherent a manner that they could make nothing out of it. She got some composing medicine, and by order of the physician every one left the room except her own maid, as much depended on quiet. He left the house soon after, promising to call in an hour or two.

Henly, who had been sent for, now arrived, and could not comprehend the cause of her sudden illness. With all the impetuosity of temper natural to him, he wished to go into her room, but was restrained by the entreaties of the housekeeper. All her faults were for the time forgotten, and she appeared before his eyes the same artless Elizabeth he had first seen in the manse of Glenerrach.

Happy had it been if those feelings had continued, and that he had not once more given way to appearances. He impatiently waited for her awaking, hoping she would then be able to give some account of her indisposition.

She awoke, but was still in a state of delirium, and kept constantly calling out,—“ I will not see him,—indeed I never will see Colonel Stanhope again. Henly! dear Henly! could you suppose that I would ever listen to any thing improper? No, no! *you* were my first love, and I never will love another. Kate! dearest Kate! I wish you were here; you would tell Henly that I have never done any thing wrong, although some enemy has poisoned his mind against me. No, no,—I never would wrong him.”

Henly heard her at one time make use of this sort of language, and felt deep regret for what he had said to her that day, supposing it had made such an impression on her (however indig-

nant she felt at the time), as to cause her present delirium, and he was determined, the first lucid moment she had, to ask her forgiveness, as he was quite assured that any one who could feel so keenly at a suspected error, could not really be the guilty being he was led to suppose her.

The medical gentlemen called at the time appointed, and found her fever a good deal reduced, but not so much so but that they ordered a blister to be applied. They then assured Henly they had no fears for her if she had a quiet night's rest.

In Henly's joy he forgot his prudence, and in place of passing the evening quietly at home, with all the eagerness natural to a mind already too much occupied by one fatal failing, he repaired to some of his usual haunts, and commenced his accustomed game. Some acquaintance happening to ask after Mrs. Henly's health, he said she had been taken very suddenly and

alarmingly ill that forenoon, but she was now considerably better.

“ She seemed pretty well when I saw her to-day,” said Colonel Stanhope, who happened to be near him.

“ May I ask at what hour you called ?” said Henly.

“ Oh, certainly,” said the other ; “ it was about two o’clock, and I never saw Mrs. Henly seemingly in better spirits.”

“ No doubt,” said Henly, “ wherever Colonel Stanhope appears (whose powers of pleasing are so well known) all bad spirits must vanish.”

“ Yes,” said Stanhope, “ I flatter myself that I have some influence over the fair sex.”

“ You do not presume to insinuate, I hope,” said Henly, warmly, “ that your powers of pleasing had any influence over Mrs. Henly ?”

“ I insinuate nothing,” said Stanhope, “ nor will I further explain myself.”

“ By heavens you shall,” said Henly, “ and that immediately. Follow me.”

It was in vain for the bystanders to interfere; they were out of the room in a moment. A friend of Stanhope's followed them, and entreated that the meeting might be put off till next day; but they were both equally heated, and would not be restrained.

“Then I must accompany you, Stanhope; and you, Mr. Henly, must provide yourself with a friend.”

“I fear,” said Henly, “at this hour it will be difficult for me to meet with any of my own acquaintance; but, sir, if you know any gentleman in the public room who will be present, I shall be grateful to him.”

Mr. Miller (the name of Stanhope's friend) went out and returned, introducing a Mr. Watson to Henly, and in a short time every thing was arranged. They were to fight with swords in a large room, and by candle-light.

They were excellent fencers, and victory was for some time doubtful; but at last a wound, which Stanhope received in his sword arm, forced him to

yield. He had also been wounded in the side, which had been unobserved; till, becoming very faint after he had dropped his sword, he exclaimed,—“Enough, Mr. Henly—I believe I have got my death-wound. If I have, I here declare, before these gentlemen, I have no fault with you—every thing on your part has been honourable. I also confess I gave you every provocation. I repeat, Mrs. Henly—is—is—”

He could say no more, as he immediately fainted from loss of blood.

A surgeon had been immediately sent for, who now arrived, and after a minute examination of the wound, said he could ascertain nothing but that at present it looked very bad.

Mr. Miller went to Colonel Stanhope's to order every thing proper for the invalid, as well as to prepare Mrs. Stanhope for the melancholy scene she was soon to witness.

Mr. Watson now asked Henly if he could do any thing for him, and if he

would not think it prudent to withdraw himself for a little till the event could be ascertained. But he positively refused ; his life was in no danger from Colonel Stanhope's speech, and he was determined to hover near that gentleman till he could have an explanation of his unfinished sentence. " There is my address," said he, " and whatever happens I shall be ready when called on."

Every thing being now ready for the removal of the wounded man, he was carried, in a very weak condition, home to his afflicted wife, He was in a state of insensibility when brought in and placed on the bed.

She wept over him, and exclaimed—
" Alas, Stanhope ! I have long feared this. I have long feared that the hand of violence would, sooner or later, check your dissipated career."

The doctor assuring her that much depended on the quietness of his patient, she was prevailed on to leave the

room, and to trust him to the care of his own servant and the doctor.

Henly mean time had returned home. He asked how his lady was, and was told she was greatly better since the blister had been applied, and was now in a quiet sleep. He asked if there had been any visitors that day; he was told none, save Colonel Stanhope. This was enough; it confirmed him in the idea, that although Elizabeth had not yet forfeited every thing valuable to woman—her honour, she certainly encouraged Stanhope, when she would admit his visits in open defiance of his wishes, so pointedly expressed to her that very morning.

Here was another striking proof of *precipitance* in Henly. Had he considered a moment, he would have been convinced, that if Elizabeth had forbidden the Colonel's visits on the footing they then were, it would have been a declaration of her husband's jealousy, and a triumph to him.

But we fear we must not give her the credit of not breaking with Colonel Stanhope for the above cause; we must be candid enough to say, it arose rather from pique to her husband, and a wish to shew him that she would not be dictated to as to her visitors. Her pride was hurt at his suspecting her, nor would that feeling allow her to give the real reason of her good spirits that evening, when she thought his close observation of her proceeded from returning affection. For it must be owned, notwithstanding all her faults, and all the complaints she made of him to her sister, he was still the being dearest to her. Disappointed in the idea of his returning love, she became petulant, and cared not what she said to him that morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE day after this fatal event, Henly sent to inquire for Colonel Stanhope, and received so distressing an account of the invalid, that some of his friends insisted on his withdrawing himself for a little time.

He at length agreed to do this as soon as he could ascertain the state of his wife's health, and make some sort of arrangement of his affairs. But, alas! he was saved all further disputes on this subject, as an execution was lodged in his house that day by a person to whom he was due ten thousand pounds; and in consequence of this, he was at last compelled to retire to lodgings within the verge of the court, that his person might be safe.

On Elizabeth's awaking that mor-

ning, she was quite collected, though weak. She did not at first clearly remember every thing; but at last she recollected her conversation with Henly, and afterwards the insult she had received from Stanhope. She knew she must have been very ill, from feeling the pain of the blister, and from her having her arm tied up, in consequence of having been bled. She dreaded to ask questions; but at last drew aside the curtain, and inquired from the servant who was in attendance what the hour was? She was told eleven. She asked if Mr. Henly was at home? She was told not. She then inquired, what bustle that was below stairs? Some reason was assigned, though not the true one (for it was the noise of the bailiffs), which seemed to satisfy her. She desired the child to be brought. As soon as she saw the little, smiling, unconscious cherub, and thought of what was likely to be the consequence of her own folly and her

husband's extravagance, she burst into tears.

Her attendants were alarmed, but she told them not to be so, as she found herself greatly relieved by weeping.

The baby was now taken away, and she had a little breakfast. She gave orders, that if Mrs. Harrington called that day she was not to be admitted. But Elizabeth did not know the extent of friendship in the bosom of a woman of the world, and that Mrs. Harrington was only the friend of those in the sunshine of prosperity, and that her heart was callous to all in adversity, even although she had been the great cause of it herself.

Mrs. Mortimer, who in the days of Elizabeth's folly seldom approached her, both from her dislike to gay society, and her disapproval of Elizabeth's pursuits, no sooner heard from Henry Gordon that her friend's faults were now likely to meet with their punishment, than she hastened to Portman Square, accompanied by him.

On reaching that, they found the house in the state above mentioned. Mrs. Mortimer was well known to the servants as being a true friend to the family, and her appearance was hailed with joy, for they were beginning to feel at a loss how to account for the continued bustle, and also for the lengthened absence of their master, who had just sent, desiring his servant to bring some changes of linen to the lodgings he had taken. This he had been induced to do by his agent, who had got information that a writ was to be issued against his person.

His heart was not so entirely lost to feeling, but that he rejoiced to find that his lady was in a state of amendment. Still, he was determined to have no interview with her till Colonel Stanhope's speech was explained, or till in some other way her innocence was ascertained to his satisfaction. This made him the more readily enter into the wishes of his agent.

Mrs. Mortimer sent up her name to Mrs. Henly, with a request to be admitted. She was so immediately, and received with grateful feelings by the abashed and penitent Elizabeth.

Mrs. Mortimer was shocked to see the change a few days had made in the appearance of the gay and lively Mrs. Henly. Her face was pale, her eyes sunk, and there was a degree of languor and depression about her which was truly distressing.

Elizabeth held out her hand to Mrs. Mortimer, and bid her welcome.—“ I was just going to send for you, my dear madam,” said she, “ knowing that in my present distress you would come to me, as I am aware you are above feeling resentment for my past neglect of you. As soon as I have strength I shall enter on a full and candid confession of my errors, and entreat of you to assist me in extricating myself from them, and also in forming a plan for my future conduct, more suitable to

a being who is accountable for her actions. Oh, Mrs. Mortimer," continued Mrs. Henly, " what a thoughtless being have I been ! I am awakened as if from a dream, and that by a shock which I think I never shall recover. But at present I dare speak no more on the hateful topic.—Where is Henly ? Alas ! the day has been, that my finger would not ache without his shewing an affectionate solicitude about me. But here have I been now for more than twenty-four hours, in a most alarming state, and he has never come near me. I fear, indeed I 'am sure, that I have lost his affections. And what aggravates my distress is, that I have taken no pains to recover them."

She now wept bitterly for a few minutes.

Mrs. Mortimer was at a loss what to say, when Elizabeth asked her if *she* knew what was the cause of the bustle below stairs ? " Tell me," said she, " is my husband well ? I fear he and

Colonel Stanhope may have met, and something fatal have taken place."

"I assure you," said Mrs. Mortimer, "that your husband is in perfect health, but at present not in the house. Rest satisfied till you are a little more composed, and you shall get all the information I can give you."

Mr. Gordon, meantime, was equally busy below. It was only now he heard of the duel, which shocked him much, convinced as he was of the innocence of Mrs. Henly. He could account for it no way, but by supposing that her enemies had excited her husband's jealousy, and that he, in his passion, had insulted Colonel Stanhope, who, dissipated as he was, would, next to succeeding in his attempts of seducing a female from her duty, feel a triumph in blasting her reputation; and what way more likely to succeed in so diabolical scheme, than in fighting a duel with her husband, when the real cause of it was not correctly known?

As to the pecuniary matters of Mr. Henly, Gordon knew, that although they were in disorder (which he did from hearing of the execution, which was the cause of bringing him and Mrs. Mortimer to Portman Square), they were not desperate, as he had had a free and unencumbered estate, besides lying money, when he married. And although, by gaming and extravagance, he might have burthened them to a great amount, he could not possibly have ruined them in so short a time as since his marriage.

This idea made Gordon, without hesitation, offer his own bail and a friend's, whom he could rely on ; and the officers, who knew both gentlemen to be of respectability, made no objection to vacate the house, which they did immediately, and it was restored to tranquillity.

As soon as he had accomplished this friendly action, he obtained Mr. Henly's address ; and leaving a message for

Mrs. Mortimer, in case she asked for him, he proceeded immediately to visit his friend. He sent up his name, as he had too much delicacy to intrude on adversity uncalled for; and Mr. Henly, who was busy with his attorney, instantly admitted him.

What a lesson was now held forth to Henry Gordon's view! It was more likely to have a good effect, than the longest lecture on morality which he could listen to; for here, all that could be spoken of as the consequence of a deviation from rectitude was before him. Nor was it a lesson that a young man, of Mr. Gordon's turn of mind, could easily forget. He saw George Henly, about his own age, and of a much superior fortune, involved in difficulties, both of a pecuniary nature and otherways;—the first arising from having formed improper associates; the last from his precipitance in judging from appearances, without giving himself time to reflect.

On Gordon's entering the room, Mr. Henly held out his hand to him, and told him how happy he was to see him; "though I scarce deserve it;" added he, "after my rejection of all the good advice you gave me—advice which, had I followed, I would not now be the wretch I am,—a bankrupt in fortune, and, what is worse, a being to be held up as a mark of scorn to be pointed at, in consequence of the deviation of my wife from virtue."

"Hush!" said Gordon, "never believe that: as soon would I suspect the purity of an infant, as I would that of Mrs. Henly. Whoever has dared to asperse her fame, has had views of their own to answer."

"I would I could doubt it!" said Henly; "but I was witness myself to the pleasure she seemed to have in Colonel Stanhope's attentions; and when I expressed my disapprobation of his continuing his visits, she plainly told me she would not be dictated to. And

that very day, did she not receive him? and did he not remain a considerable time with her? Nay, that night, after I had left her, filled with remorse for my harshness (thinking her illness was caused by it), that very night I say, did not Colonel Stanhope insinuate that he had some influence over Mrs. Henly's feelings? What husband could bear that, Gordon? And," added Henly, "did he not, after he was wounded, mention her name, but, from his fainting, he could not finish the sentence. But, by all that is good, he shall explain himself!"

"All you have said, Henly, does not, in the least, alter my opinion of Mrs. Henly. Have a little patience till she is sufficiently recovered, and I am convinced that she will clear up matters entirely to your satisfaction."

"After what Stanhope so publicly said," answered Henly, "I must have other proofs of her innocence than her own assertions. But I shall say no

more on this subject at present. Pray have you heard any thing of the Colonel this morning?"

"No," said Gordon; "it is not above an hour since I had the first intelligence of his wound; but I shall now go and make inquiries."

He did so, and returned almost immediately, saying, he had accidentally met the surgeon (whom he knew), who told him that the wound was assuming rather a threatening appearance, but he could give no decisive opinion till the next dressing.

Gordon now asked, with much interest, what he could do for Henly? Who told him, he had already requested his attorney to call in all his bills, and to ascertain the full amount of his debts of every description.—"When I have done so," added he, "I shall be better able to lay down some plan for the adjustment of my affairs. Leave me now, and let me see you in the evening;—bring intelligence of Mrs.

Henry's health. Tell me also of my poor child."

Henry returned to Portman Square, where he was happy to find matters bore a better appearance. Mrs. Henly had no complaint but weakness. But still, as Mrs. Mortimer feared that she might have intelligence of the duel in some unguarded moment, she resolved to stay the night with her, and had accordingly dispatched a communication to that effect to her daughters.

She was a good deal shocked at the account Henry gave of his friend, and of his obstinacy respecting his wife, of whose innocence Mrs. Mortimer had not the slightest doubt. But she was quite aware that the duel, and Colonel Stanhope's unfinished speech, would be received in a different manner by the enemies of Elizabeth; and that many, whose conduct would not bear the scrutiny hers could, would be happy to bring her to a level with themselves.

But she hoped that in the end innocence would triumph.

Gordon fulfilled his promise of returning to Henly in the evening. He found him in better spirits, as he was happy to find his pecuniary affairs were not so far involved, but that a little exertion would recover them. "But what signifies that," said he, "when I have lost Elizabeth? Oh, Gordon! had you seen her when I first met her at the manse of her father, blooming in health and innocence, without a wish beyond a rustic ball, or an idea of happiness beyond her native glen, you would wonder at the change, and at her so soon forgetting herself!"

"That she has been imprudent in forming acquaintance with people so likely to mislead her, I grant," said Gordon. "But forgive me, Mr. Henly, if I still differ from you in imputing guilt to her."

"I need not, I hope, say to you,

Henry," said Mr. Henly, "how happy it will make me to find that Stanhope's speech would admit of another interpretation. And you, I know, will endeavour to see him as soon as it will be safe, and request an explanation of it from him."

"Undoubtedly," said Gordon, "it shall be my first care to-morrow. In the meantime, my dear Sir, let me entreat of you to endeavour to get some repose, of which you stand so much in need; and be assured, that I shall devote my time entirely to you, till I see things more comfortable in their appearance than they are at present.

"A thousand thanks, my kind friend," said Henly, pressing his hand. "Alas! why did I not, on coming to London, meet with such friends?—or meeting with them, choose them for my associates, in place of those I did, who now, in my adversity, turn their backs on me?"

“ You and I,” said Gordon, “ have been brought up in different schools; you in the school of self-indulgence, and I in that of self-control. Educated by pious and virtuous parents, I was early taught to make religion the basis of every action, and to consider well whether what I was about to do was consistent with that or not. This, of course, has brought me to have a command over my own feelings, which I now look on as a blessing, and has deterred me from bringing distress on the woman I love. Yes, Mr. Henly,” said he, “ I love, fondly love Sophia Mortimer; and I have some reason to suspect that my addresses would not be disagreeable to her; but thinking her mother has other views for her, I have endeavoured to resist my feelings; and I am proud to say that I think I have in some measure succeeded.”

Henly was much affected at this picture of self-command drawn by Gor-

don.—“ You have taught me a lesson, Henry,” said he, “ which I trust I never shall forget. I am now convinced that all the misfortunes of Elizabeth and myself have arisen from that impatience of contradiction I never was taught to subdue, and was the cause of that precipitance I was guilty of in hurrying my marriage, without a complete knowledge of her character and disposition. Not that I can find any fault with the last, as it is sweet and gentle (unless now contaminated with folly); but it was too like my own, and she was like me unused to contradiction. Indeed she never required it where she was; and had she met with a being like yourself, steady in what was right, she would have turned out an ornament to society. Unfortunately, too, for us, my sister and Morris were hurried from us, and we were drawn into the whirlpool of fashion, and were too much fascinated by its allurements

to recede, till we are now lost to society."

"Come," said Gordon, "I will have no more gloom. I shall once more bid you good-night, and depend on seeing me in the morning; fraught, I hope, with good news to you."

Mrs. Mortimer, meantime, was not idle in her friendly task. Having seen every thing arranged comfortably in Elizabeth's room, she sat down to give Catherine an account of how matters were going on, aware that next day's papers would have an erroneous account of the duel; and if read by the worthy family at the manse, would of course cause them extreme pain. She was assured that truth was best; she therefore gave a candid narrative of all the circumstances as they had come to her knowledge, and left it to her own good sense and judgment to communicate what she thought proper to her parents.

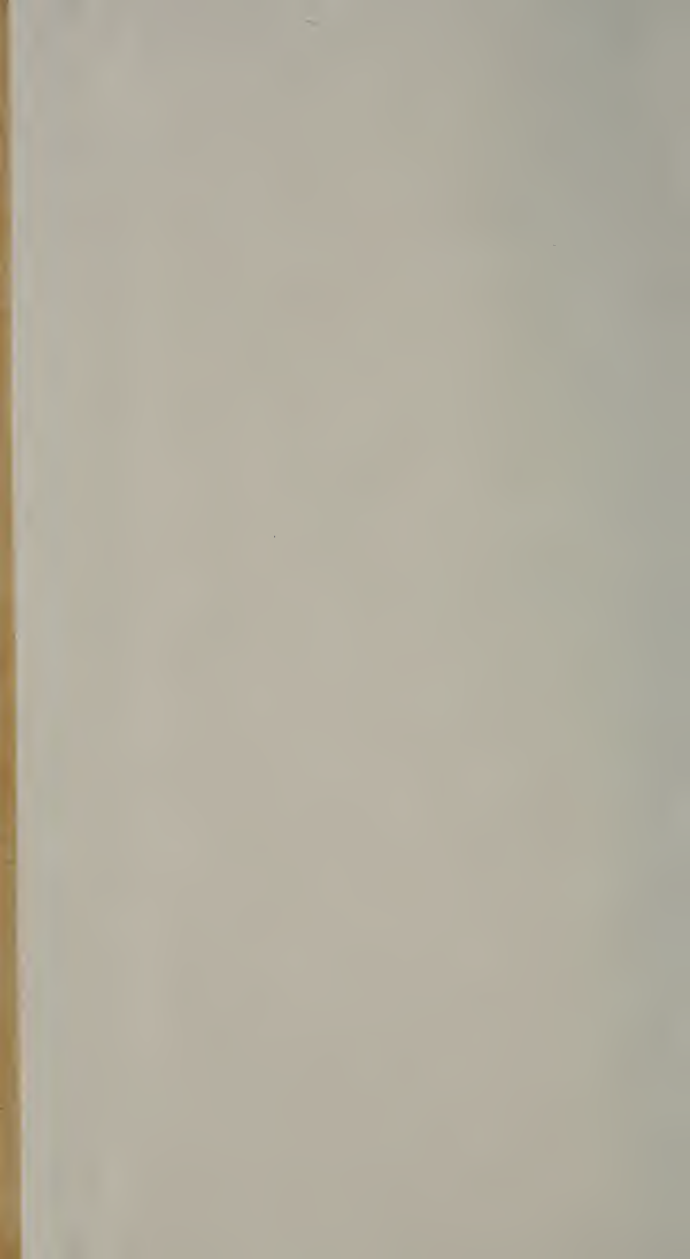
This friendly duty performed, and hearing every thing was quiet in the apartment of the invalid, she retired to that made ready for her, and prepared for a night's rest, sweetened with the consciousness of having passed the day in the exercise of that duty imposed on every Christian, of doing good, and aiding the distressed.

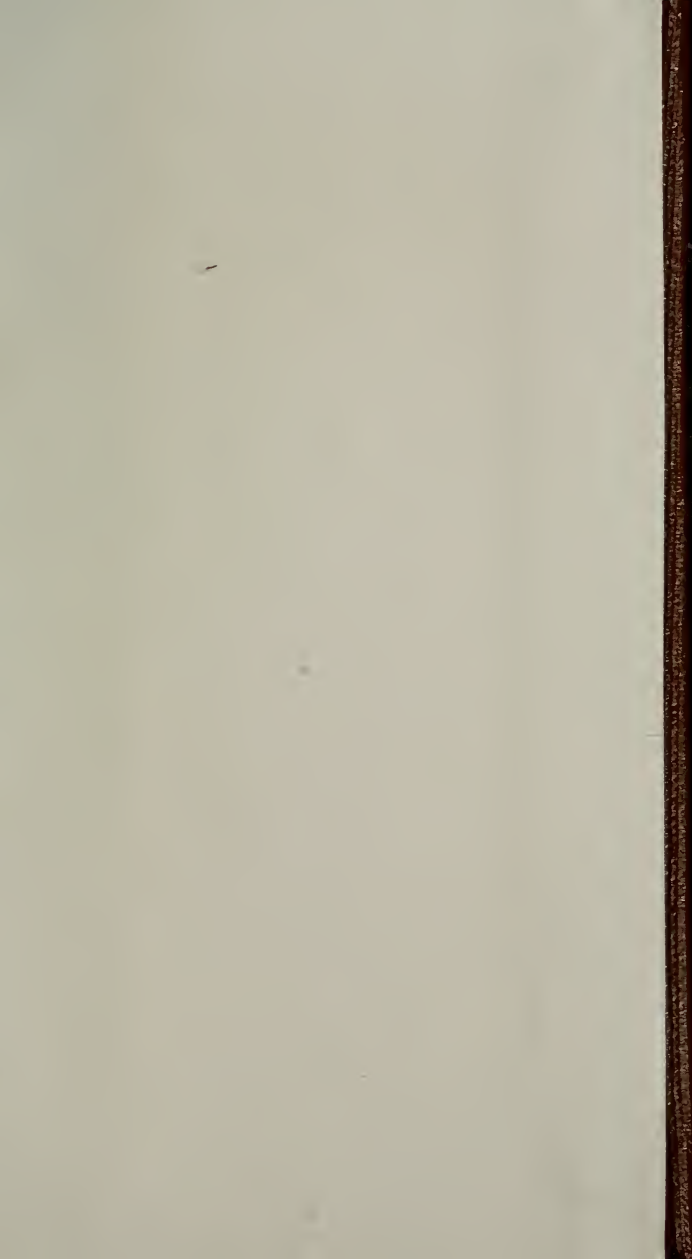
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